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Memorial

of

James Fenimore Cooper

New York G P Putnam

1852

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MEETING IN THE CITY HALL, SEPTEMBER 25, 1851.
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, OCTOBER 7, 1851.
MEETING IN METROPOLITAN HALL, FEBRUARY 24, 1852.

Discourse on the Life and Genius of Cooper,

BY WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT.

Speeches by

DANIEL WEBSTER,

PRESIDING AT THE MEETING HELD IN METROPOLITAN HALL;

JOHN W. FRANCIS,
GEORGE BANCROFT,
GEORGE W. BETHUNE,
G. P. R. JAMES,
FRANCIS L. HAWKS,
SAMUEL OSGOOD.

Letters from

WASHINGTON IRVING,
WILLIAM C. BRYANT,
GEORGE W. DOANE,
JAMES K. PAULDING,
G. P. R. JAMES,
GEORGE BANCROFT,
EDWARD EVERETT,
CHARLES JARED INGERSOLL,
JAMES E. DE KAY,
FRANCIS LIEBER,
LEWIS CASS,
RICHARD RUSH,
HENRY REED,
JAMES HALL,
HERMAN MELVILLE,
WILLIAM H. PRESCOTT,
RICHARD H. DANA,
RALPH WALDO EMERSON,
NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE,
CHARLES SUMNER,
HENRY W. LONGFELLOW,
FRANCIS PARKMAN,
FRANCIS L. HAWKS,
ALFRED B. STREET,
SAMUEL F. B. MORSE,
WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS,
JOHN P. KENNEDY,
JOHN R. THOMPSON,
CHARLES G. LELAND,
JOHN W. FRANCIS.

Prospectus of the Cooper Monument Association.

PUBLIC HONOURS TO THE MEMORY OF MR. COOPER,

In the City of New York.

At a meeting of friends of the late James Fenimore Cooper, held in the City Hall, in the city of New York, pursuant to notice, on the 25th of September, 1851, Washington Irving in the Chair, and Fitz-Greene Halleck and Rufus W. Griswold, Secretaries, the following gentlemen were appointed a Committee to make the necessary arrangements for a suitable demonstration of respect for Mr. Cooper's memory:

WASHINGTON IRVING,
GULIAN C. VERPLANCK,
JOHN DUER,
JAMES K. PAULDING,
JOHN W. FRANCIS,
RICHARD B. KIMBALL,
FRANCIS L. HAWKS,
WILLIAM C. BRYANT,
WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL,
FITZ-GREENE HALLECK,
RUFUS W. GRISWOLD,
CHARLES KING,
GEORGE BANCROFT,
LEWIS GAYLORD CLARK,
JOHN A. DIX,
GEORGE P. MORRIS,
SAMUEL OSGOOD,
CHARLES ANTHON,
CHARLES F. BRIGGS,
MAUNSELL B. FIELD,
PARKE GODWIN,
JONA. M. WAINWRIGHT,
DONALD G. MITCHELL,
GEO. P. PUTNAM,
N. P. WILLIS,
J. G. COGSWELL,
J. STARBUCK MAYO.

At this meeting the following letters were read:

From Washington Irving.

Sunnyside, *Thursday, Sept.* 18, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—The death of Fenimore Cooper, though anticipated, is an event of deep and public concern, and calls for the highest expression of public sensibility. To me it comes with something of a shock: for it seems but the other day that I saw him at our common literary resort at Putnam's, in full vigour of mind and body, a very "castle of a man," and apparently destined to outlive me, who am several years his senior. He has left a space in our literature which will not easily be supplied.....I shall not fail to attend the proposed meeting on Wednesday next. Very respectfully, your friend and servant.

WASHINGTON IRVING.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

From William C. Bryant.

ROCHESTER, *Friday, Sept.* 19, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—I am sorry that the arrangements for my journey to the West are such that I cannot be present at the meeting which is about to be held to do honour to the memory of Mr. Cooper, on losing whom not only the country, but the civilized world and the age in which we live, have lost one of their most illustrious ornaments. It is melancholy to think that it is only until such men are in their graves that full justice is done to their merit. I shall be most happy to concur in any step which may be taken to express, in a public manner, our respect for the character of one to whom we were too sparing of public distinctions in his lifetime, and beg that I may be included in the proceedings of the occasion as if I were present. I am, very respectfully, yours,

WM. C. BRYANT.

REV. R. W. GRISWOLD.

From Bishop Doane.

RIVERSIDE, *Tuesday, Sept.* 22, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—.... I beg you to say, generally, in your discretion, that I yield to no one who will be present, in my estimate of the distinguished talents and admirable services of Mr. Cooper, or in my readiness to do the highest honour to his illustrious memory. His name must ever find a place among the "household words" of all our hearts; a name as beautiful for its blamelessness of life, as it is eminent for its attainments in letters, which has subordinated to the higher interests of patriotism and piety, the fervours of fancy and the fascinations of romance. Very faithfully, your friend and servant,

G. W. DOANE.

REV. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

From James K. Paulding.

HYDE PARK, *Sept.* 23, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—..... You will state the reason of my absence, ...at the same time giving assurance of my cordial co-operation in any tribute they may offer to the memory of one who occupied so high a place among the distinguished authors of the age, and whose many estimable qualities merited the sincere regard of all who knew him. Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. K. PAULDING.

REV. DR. GRISWOLD.

From G. P. R. James.

STOCKBRIDGE, Mass., 23*d Sept.*, 1851.

Dear Doctor Griswold:—I regret extremely that it will not be in my power to be present at the meeting to testify respect for the memory of Mr. Cooper. I grieve sincerely that so eminent a man is lost to the country and the world; and though unacquainted with him personally, I need hardly tell you how highly his abilities as an author, and his character, were appreciated by Yours faithfully,

G. P. R. JAMES.

From Mr. Bancroft.

NEWPORT, R. I., *Thursday, Sept.* 18, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—I heartily sympathize with the design of a public tribute to the genius, manly character, and great career of the illustrious man whose loss we deplore. Others have combined very high merit as authors, with professional pursuits. Mr. Cooper was, of those who have gone from among us, the first to devote himself exclusively to letters. We must admire the noble courage with which he entered on a course which none before him had tried; the glory which he justly won was reflected on his country, of whose literary independence he was the pioneer, and deserves the grateful recognition of all who survive him.

By the time proposed for the meeting, I fear I shall not be able to return to New York; but you may use my name in any manner that shall strongly express my delight in the writings of our departed friend, my thorough respect for his many virtues, and my sense of that surpassing ability which has made his own name and the names of the creations of his fancy, household words throughout the civilized world.

I remain, dear sir, very truly yours,

GEORGE BANCROFT.

REV. R. W. GRISWOLD.

From Mr. Everett.

CAMBRIDGE, *Sept.* 23, 1851.

Dear Sir:—I received, this afternoon, your favour of the 17th, inviting me to attend and participate in the meeting to be held in your City Hall, for the purpose of doing honour to the memory of the late Mr. Fenimore Cooper.

I sincerely regret that I cannot be with you. The state of the weather puts it out of my power to make the journey. The object of the meeting has my entire sympathy. The works of Mr. Cooper have adorned and elevated our literature. There is nothing more purely

American, in the highest sense of the word, than several of them. In his department he is *facile princeps*. He wrote too much to write every thing equally well; but his abundance flowed out of a full, original mind, and his rapidity and variety bespoke a resolute and manly consciousness of power. If among his works there are some which, had he been longer spared to us, he would himself, on reconsideration, have desired to recall, there are many more which the latest posterity "will not willingly let die."

With much about him that was intensely national, we have but one other writer (Mr. Irving) as widely known abroad. Many of Cooper's novels were not only read at every fireside in England, but were translated into every language of the European continent.

He owed a part of his inspiration to the magnificent nature which surrounded him; to the lakes, and forests, and Indian traditions, and border-life of your great state. It would have been as difficult to create Leatherstocking any where out of New York, or some state closely resembling it, as to create Don Quixote out of Spain. To have trained and possessed Fenimore Cooper will be—is already—with justice, one of your greatest boasts. But we cannot let you monopolize the care of his memory. We have all rejoiced in his genius; we have all felt the fascination of his pen; we all deplore his loss. You must allow us all to join you in doing honour to the name of our great American novelist. I remain dear sir, with great respect,

Very truly yours,

EDWARD EVERETT.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

From Charles Jared Ingersoll.

Fonthill, Philadelphia, *Sept. 30th*, 1851.

Dear Sir:—Your favour, inviting me to a meeting of the friends of Fenimore Cooper, did not reach me till this morning, owing probably to an irregularity of the post-office. Otherwise I should have tried to attend the proposed meeting, not only as a friend of Mr. Cooper, but as one among those of his countrymen who consider his memory a national trust for honoured preservation.

In my opinion of Fenimore Cooper as a novelist he is entitled to one merit to which few if any one of his contemporary European romance writers can lay claim, to wit, originality. Leatherstocking is an original character, and entirely American, which is probably one of the reasons why Cooper was more appreciated in Continental Europe than even Scott, whose magnificent fancy embellished every thing, but whose

genius, I think, originated nothing. And then, in my estimate of Mr. Cooper's superior merits, was manly independence—a rare American virtue. For the less free Englishman or Frenchman, politically, there was a freeness in the expression as well as adoption of his own views of men and things. And a third kindred merit of Cooper was high-minded and gentlemanly abstinence from self-applause. No distinguished or applauded man ever was less apt to talk of himself and his performances. Unlike too many modern poets, novelists, and other writers, apt to become debauchees, drunkards, blackguards and the like, (as if, as some think, genius and vice go together,) Mr. Cooper was a gentleman remarkable for good plain sense, correct deportment, striking probity and propriety, and withal unostentatiously devout. Not meaning to disparage any one in order by odious comparisons to extol him, I deem his Naval History a more valuable and enduring historical work than many others, both English and American, of contemporaneous publication and much wider dissemination. In short, if the gentlemen whose names I have seen in the public journals with yours, proposing some concentrated eulogium, should determine to appoint a suitable person, with time to prepare it, I believe that Fenimore Cooper may be made the subject of illustration in very many and most striking lights, justly reflecting him, and with excellent influence on his country.

I do not recollect, from what I read lately in the newspapers, precisely what you and the other gentlemen associated with you in this proceeding propose to do, or whether any thing is to take place. But if so, whatever and wherever it may be, I beg you to use this answer to your invitation, and any services I can render, as cordial contributions, which I shall be proud and happy to make.

I am, very respectfully, your humble servant,

C. J. INGERSOLL.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

Letters of similar import were read from George Ticknor, William H. Prescott, John Neal, William Gilmore Simms, William Ware, and other eminent literary men, and the meeting was attended by Dr. Francis Lieber, Henry C. Carey, and other persons of distinction from different parts of the country.

The committee, in the next two months, held at the Astor House frequent meetings, at one of which Mr. Greenough,

the eminent sculptor, was so obliging as to furnish much interesting and serviceable information and suggestion respecting monuments, in answer to the committee's inquiries. On one of these occasions the following letter was read from Washington Irving:

Sunnyside, *Oct.* 15*th*, 1851.

My Dear Sir:—My occupations in the country prevent my attendance in town at the meetings of the committee, but I am anxious to know what is doing. I signified at our first meeting what I thought the best monument to the memory of Mr. Cooper—a statue. It is the simplest, purest, and most satisfactory—perpetuating the likeness of the person. I understand there is an excellent bust of Mr. Cooper extant, made when he was in Italy. He was there in his prime; and it might furnish the model for a noble statue. Judge Duer suggested that his monument should be placed at Washington, perhaps in the Smithsonian Institute. I would rather for New York, as he belonged to this state, and the scenes of several of his best works were laid in it. Besides, the seat of government may be changed, and then Washington would lose its importance; whereas New York must always be a great and growing metropolis—the place of arrival and departure for this part of the world—the great resort of strangers from abroad, and of our own people from all parts of the Union. One of our beautiful squares would be a fine situation for a statue. However, I am perhaps a little too local in my notions on this matter. Cooper emphatically belongs to the nation, and his monument should be placed where it would be most in public view. Judge Duer's idea therefore may be the best. There will be a question of what material the statue (if a statue is determined on) should be made. White marble is the most beautiful, but how would it stand our climate in the open air? Bronze stands all weathers and all climates, but does not give so clearly the expression of the countenance, when regarded from a little distance.

These are all suggestions scrawled in haste, which I should have made if able to attend the meeting of the committee. I wish you would drop me a line to let me know what is done or doing.

Yours, very truly,

WASHINGTON IRVING.

Rev. Rufus Griswold.

The action of the committee was deferred several weeks in consequence of the absence of Mr. Bryant, of whom it was from the beginning intended to request the delivery of a discourse on Mr. Cooper, and who was then on a tour through the Western states; but on his return to the city it was at once determined that the public proceedings, which were in contemplation, should be held in Metropolitan Hall on the 24th of December. Mr. Webster very readily consented to preside on the occasion, and there was a prospect of such a result as should most perfectly gratify the friends of the illustrious deceased, and vindicate the popular appreciation of eminent moral and intellectual qualities; but the arrival of Louis Kossuth in New York not only engrossed in an astonishing degree the general feeling and attention, but his prospective visit to the seat of Government rendered it impossible for the Secretary of State to be absent at that period; and the committee, therefore, with perfect unanimity, decided to defer the proposed commemorative proceedings, until such a combination of favouring circumstances as was deemed necessary should warrant the appointment of another day.

In the meanwhile, at the meeting of the *New York Historical Society*, on the evening of Tuesday, the 7th of October, the Hon. Luther Bradish in the chair, after the transaction of the regular business, the following resolutions were moved by Rev. Rufus W. Griswold:

Whereas, It has pleased Almighty God to remove from this life our illustrious associate and countryman, James Fenimore Cooper, while his fame was in its fullness, and his intelligence was still unclouded by age or any infirmity, therefore:

Resolved, That this Society has heard of the death of JAMES FENIMORE COOPER with profound regret:

That it recognizes in him an eminent subject and a masterly illustrator of our history:

That, in his contributions to our literature, he displayed eminent genius and a truly national spirit:

That, in his personal character, he was honourable, brave, sincere, and generous, as respectable for unaffected virtue, as he was distinguished for great capacities:

That this Society, appreciating the loss which, however heavily it has fallen upon this country and the literary world, has fallen most heavily upon his family, instructs its officers to convey to his family, assurances of respectful sympathy and condolence.

Mr. GEORGE BANCROFT having seconded these resolutions,

Dr. JOHN W. FRANCIS said:—I am rejoiced at the presentation of these resolutions to the Society. Among the many great literary men whom our country has produced, there were none greater than Mr. Cooper. I knew him for a period of thirty years, and during all that time I never knew any thing of his character that was not in the highest degree praiseworthy. He was a man of great decision of character, and a fair expositor of his own thoughts on every occasion—a thorough American, for I never knew a man who was more entirely so in heart and principle. He was able, with his vast knowledge, and a powerful physical structure, to complete whatever he attempted. Men might dissent from his opinions, but no one ever successfully impugned his facts. He had studied the history of this country with a large philosophy, and understood our people and their character better than any other writer of the age. He was not only perfectly acquainted with our general history, but he was also conversant with that of every state, county, village, lake, and river of the country.

New York, with its history, was his delight. Mr. Cooper was emphatically a New York man. And with this vast knowledge he was no less remarkable for his ability as an historian than for his intrepidity of personal character.

I will trespass but a moment longer on the time of the Society. It was natural to infer, that a life of such integrity, so usefully and so honourably passed, as Mr. Cooper's, should be closed by a death equally entitled to our notice. With the calmness of a Christian philosopher he listened to the details of his critical situation. I had every reason to believe from my professional interviews with him, and from what I learned afterwards from his interesting family, by whom he was surrounded in his dying hours, that death had no terrors for him; that he was fully prepared to enter into eternity. He had for some considerable time previously devoted himself to the study of the holy Scriptures—had become an active member of the Protestant Episcopal Church—and had received its sacraments, in the administrations of his pastor, the Rev. Mr. Batten. He had for many years been chosen a delegate of the church at Cooperstown, to the Annual Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York; and on a recent occasion, and at an important crisis, he exhibited commanding powers in justification of the views he expressed in the defence of certain principles in church discipline, and on the purity of the ministerial office. In the full fruition of the promises of the Christian faith, he died, at his beautiful sylvan retreat, on Otsego Lake, at half-past one o'clock, P. M., on Sunday, the 14th September, 1851,—one day before the completion of his sixty-second year. He expired, calm and resigned, in full possession of his intellectual powers.

I leave to others of our associates to enlarge on the magnificence of his gifts—his intellectual labours—the benefits he has conferred on letters, and on society, and the beneficence he exercised to the poor and to the needy. I could not allow this opportunity to pass without paying my tribute to the merits of this truly great man.

Mr. Bancroft next addressed the Society. My friend, he said, has spoken of the illustrious deceased as an American—I say that he was an embodiment of the American feeling, and truly illustrated American greatness. We were endeavouring to hold up our heads before the world, and to claim a character and an intellect of our own, when Cooper appeared with his powerful genius to support our pretensions. He came forth imbued with American life, and feeling, and sentiment. Another like Cooper cannot appear, for he was peculiarly suited to his time, which was that of an invading civilization. The fame and honour which he gained were not obtained by obsequious deference to public opinion, but simply by his great ability and manly character. Great as he was in the department of romantic fiction, he was not less deserving of praise in that of history. In Lionel Lincoln he has described the battle of Bunker Hill better than it is described in any other work. In his Naval History of the United States, he has left us the most admirable composition of which any nation could boast on a similar subject.

Mr. Bancroft proceeded in a masterly analysis of some of Mr. Cooper's characters, and ended with an impressive assertion of the purity of his contributions to our literature, the eminence of his genius, and the dignity of his personal character.

My friend, he said, has alluded to the religious sentiments of Mr. Cooper. It has been said, "an undevout astronomer is mad," but with as much truth may it be said of an irreligious man of letters. Following the subtle processes of human learning, busied with the nicest operations of the mind, pursuing truth as the great object, shall he, in tracing the streams, forget the Fountain of all truth? Mr. Cooper certainly did not do so.

The Rev. Samuel Osgood said :—

It must seem presumptuous in me, Mr. President, to try to add any thing to the tribute which has been paid to the memory of Cooper, by gentlemen so peculiarly qualified, from their experience and position, to speak of the man and his services. But all professions have their own point of view, and I may be allowed to say a few words upon the relation of our great novelist to the historical associations and moral standards of our nation. I cannot claim more than a passing acquaintance with the deceased, and it belongs to friends more favoured to interpret the asperities and illustrate the amenities which are likely to mark the character of a man so decided in his make and habit. With his position as an interpreter of American history, and a delineator of American character, we are in this Society most closely concerned. None in this presence, I am sure, will rebuke me for speaking of the novelist as among the most important agents of popular education, powerful either for good or ill.

Is it not true, sir, that the romance is the prose epic of modern society, and that we now look to its pages for the most graphic portraitures of men, manners, and events?

Social and political life is too complex now for the stately march of the heroic poem, and this age of print needs not the carefully measured verse to make sentences musical to the ear, or to save them from being mutilated by circulation. The romance is now the chosen form of imaginative literature, and its gifted masters are educators of the popular ideal. What epic poem of our times begins to compare in influence over the common mind with the stories of Scott and Cooper? Our novelist loved most to treat of scenes and characters distinctively national, and his name stands indelibly written on our fairest lakes and rivers, our grandest seas and mountains, our annals of early sacrifice and daring. With some of his criticisms on society, and some of his views of political and historical questions, I have personally little sympathy. But, when it is asked, in the impartial standard of critical justice, what influence has he exerted over the moral tone of American literature, or to what aim has he wielded the fascinating pen of romance, there can be but one reply. With him, fancy has always walked hand in hand with purity, and the ideal of true manhood, which is every where most prominent in his works, is one of which we may well be proud as a nation and as men.

The element of will, perhaps more strongly than intellectual analysis, or exquisite sensibility, or high imagination, is the distinguished characteristic of his heroes, and in this his portraitures are good types of what is strongest in the practical American mind. His model man, whether forester, sailor, servant, or gentleman, is always bent on bringing some especial thing to pass, and the progress from the plan to the achievement is described with military or naval exactness.

Yet he never overlooks any of the essential traits of a noble manhood, and loves to show how much of enterprise, courage, compassion, and reverence it combines with practical judgment and religious principle.

It has seemed to me that his stories of the seas and the forests are fitted to act more than ever upon the strong hearts in training for the new spheres of triumph which are now so wonderfully opening upon our people. Who does not wish that his noted hero of the backwoods might be known in every log-house along our extending frontier, and teach the rough pioneer always to temper daring by humanity? Who can ever forget that favourite character, as dear to the reader as to the author,—that paladin of the forest, that lion-heart of the wilderness,—Leatherstocking—fearless towards man, gentle towards woman,—a rough-cast gentleman of as true a heart as ever beat under the red cross of the crusader. The qualities needed in those old times of frontier strife are now needed for new emergencies in more peaceful border life, and our future depends vastly upon the characters that give edge to the advancing mass of our population now crowding towards the Rocky Mountains and the Pacific coast. It is well that this story-teller of the forest has been so true to the best traits of our nature, and in so many points is a moralist too. As a romancer of the sea, Cooper's genius may perhaps be but beginning to show its influence, as a new age of commercial greatness is opening upon our nation.

Mr. Cooper did not shrink from battle-scenes, and had no particular dread of gunpowder, yet his best laurels upon the ocean have been won in describing feats of seamanship and traits of manhood that need no bloody conflict for their

display, and may be exemplified in fleets as peaceful and beneficent as ever spread their sails to the breezes to bear kindly products to friendly nations. As we sit here this evening, under the influence of the hour, the images of many a famous exploit on the water seems to come out from his well-remembered pages, and mingle themselves with recent scenes of marine achievement. Has not the "Water-Witch" herself re-appeared of late in our own bay, and laden, not with contraband goods, but a freight of stout-hearted gentlemen, borne the palm as "Skimmer of the Seas" from all competitors, in presence of the royalty and nobility of England? And the old "Ironsides," has not she come back again, more iron-ribbed than ever?—not to fight over the old battles which our naval chronicler was so fond of rehearsing, but under the name of the Baltic or (better omen) the Pacific, to win a victory more honourable and encouraging than ever was carried by the thundering broadsides of the noble old Constitution! The commanders and pilots so celebrated by the novelist, have they not successors indomitable as they! and just now our ship-news brings good tidings of their achievements, as they tell us of the Flying Cloud that has made light of the storms of the fearful southern cape, and of the return of the adventurous fleet that has stood so well the hug of the Polar icebergs, and shown how nobly a crew may hunt for men on the seas, with a Red Rover's daring and a Christian's mercy.

It is well that the most gifted romancer of the sea is an American, and that he is helping us to enact the romance of history so soon to be fact. The empire of the waters, which in turn has belonged to Tyre, Venice, and England, seems waiting to come to America, and no part of the world now so

justly claims its possession as that state in which Cooper had his home. Who does not welcome the promise of the new age of powerful commerce and mental blessing? Who does not feel grateful to any man who gives any good word or work to the emancipation of the sailor from his worst enemies, and to the freedom of the seas from all the violence that stains its benignant waters? While proud of our fleet ships, let us not forget elements in their equipment more important than oak and iron. In this age of merchandise, let us adorn peace with something of the old manhood that took from warfare some of its horrors. Did time allow, I might try to illustrate the power of an attractive literature in keeping alive national associations, and moulding national character; but I am content to leave these few fragmentary words with the Society as my poor tribute to a writer who charmed many hours of my boyhood, and who has won regard anew as the entertaining and instructive beguiler of some recent days of rural recreation. May we not sincerely say that he has so used the treasures of our national scenery and history as to elevate the true ideal of true manhood, and quicken the nation's memory in many respects auspiciously for the nation's hopes?

Dr. Hawks spoke warmly of the religious sentiment in Mr. Cooper, as illustrated in his life and in his writings, quoting the eulogy of Lord Lyttleton on the poet Thomson:

> Not one immoral, one corrupted thought,
> One line which, dying, he could wish to blot.

He contrasted eloquently the pervading purity and dignity of Mr. Cooper, in a field in which the critics assigned him the highest rank that had ever been attained, with the grossness of

those authors who presumed that the sailor and the pioneer were incapable of refinement, and could be aptly painted only in language such as the judicious parent could not willingly submit to his family.

The evening of the 25th of February having finally been selected for the public commemorative proceedings in honour of Mr. Cooper, the spacious Metropolitan Hall was filled at an early hour with an assembly comprising a large representation of the intelligence and literary culture of the city. Mr. Webster took the chair at half-past seven o'clock. On his right hand were seated Mr. Bryant, Mr. Luther Bradish, Mr. Kingsland, the Mayor, and Dr. Francis; on his left Mr. Washington Irving, Chairman of the Committee, Rev. Dr. Griswold, Secretary of the Committee, and Mr. Bancroft; and on the stage, besides members of the Committee, were Rev. Dr. Henry and Professor Adler, of the University; Mr. G. P. R. James, Chancellor McCoun, Chief Justice Jones, Mr. Charles O'Conor, Mr. Ogden Hoffman, Rev. Dr. Bethune; Professor Hackley, of Columbia College; Mr. Curtis, author of "Nile Notes"; Mr. Young, editor of "The Albion;" Mr. George Ripley, Mr. H. T. Tuckerman, Mr. Benjamin F. Butler, Mr. Pell, Dr. Wynne, and many other persons of distinction.

In the speeches pronounced during the evening, and in most of the subsequent reports in the journals, the opinion was expressed that there had never before been assembled for any purpose so large an audience of the most intellectual and socially eminent classes of the city, as was then present.

The meeting was called to order by WASHINGTON IRVING, who was received with great enthusiasm. He said:—

I was sorry to find it reported that I intended to deliver an address this evening. I have no talent for public speaking; if I had I would be most happy to do justice to the genius of one whose writings entitle him to the love, respect, and admiration of every American. I appear before you, on this occasion, as Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, to present to you the Hon. DANIEL WEBSTER, who will preside at this meeting.

Mr. IRVING here introduced Mr. WEBSTER to the audience, amidst loud, enthusiastic, and long-continued applause.

When quiet was restored, Mr. WEBSTER advanced and said:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—I deem it an honour to be called upon to occupy the chair of this meeting. The object is to promote the purpose of erecting an appropriate statue to the memory of a distinguished citizen of New York, who has not only honoured the state to which he belonged, but also the whole country, of which he was a citizen, by his distinguished contributions to American literature.

Ladies and gentlemen, There are roads to fame of various character. Feats in arms acquire renown, military achievements take strong hold of the minds of men, and transmit the names of their authors to the knowledge of posterity. Political life has also its distinction, and those who have proved eminent in this career, especially if connected with events greatly affecting, and favourably affecting, the liberty of their country and of mankind, have equal right to be cherished in the grateful

recollection of succeeding generations. He, in whose honour we are now assembled, was never a soldier in arms, nor was it his lot to command the attention of listening senates. But by the diffusion of his literary productions, by his taste, talent, and industry, he had become so much an object of national regard, as one to whom all classes were indebted, for knowledge, and literary recreation.

Ladies and gentlemen, Is there any reputation more to be desired than that which is established by addressing itself to the taste and the cultivation, the morality and the religion, of civilized men? Who can more properly deserve praise than he who elevates the literature, enlightens the moral power, and strengthens the religious character of the age in which he lives?

I should not be here to-night, ladies and gentlemen, to raise my feeble voice in honour of the memory of Fenimore Cooper, however distinguished by genius, talent, education, and the art of popular writing, if in the character of his productions there was any thing to be found calculated to undermine the principles of our religious faith, or debauch the morality of the country.

Nothing of genius or talent can atone for an injury of this kind to the rising generation of the community.

As far as I am acquainted with the writings of Mr. Cooper, they uphold good sentiments, sustain good morals, and maintain just taste;—and, after saying this, I have next to add, that all his writings are truly patriotic and American, throughout and throughout.

It is for these reasons that I deem it an honour to be here, on this occasion, to perform my humble part, to rear a proper statue or monument, to the memory of Fenimore Cooper. I

consider him as having contributed largely to the reputation of American literature, at home and abroad.

He is known every where, his writings have been read not only all over this country, but wherever our language is read;—and wherever read they have inspired good feelings and given rational pleasure. He possessed the power of amusing, and of enlightening readers among the younger classes of the country, without injury to their morals or any solicitation of depraved passions. This is his great praise, and what is more honourable, or more likely to endure, than the fame which is secured by writings of this tendency? and these writings, at the same time, are full of information respecting our country, the early habits of the people and our own scenery, and are therefore likely to go down with great interest to the generations which are to succeed us, and to transmit his delineation of American character, in the age before his own, to those which shall come after him. There has been no American writer (I suppose) who imbued his own mind with a fresher or stronger feeling of the habits and manners of the early settlers of this country, who both understood the scenery and modes of life, on the frontier, between civilization and the forest, or who has presented that scenery or those modes of life with more variety and effect. He has gone; but he has left a name behind him, which it is ours to cherish and to honour; and so far as marble or bronze can perpetuate it, let marble and bronze be employed. But it is rather, I think, for the purpose of manifesting our own gratitude for his well-deserving efforts, that we ardently contribute by these material fabrics to the object of transmitting his memory to our children. The enduring monuments of Fenimore

Cooper are his works. Those, and this meeting, composed, as it is, of many of the most distinguished of the men of letters of his age and country, with other thousands of his admiring fellow-citizens, assembled in honour of his memory, constitute his fame. He might say with the great Roman orator—"Quibus pro tantis rebus, nullum ego a vobis præmium virtutis, nullum insigne honoris, nullum monumentum laudis postulo, præterquam hujus diei memoriam sempiternam. In animis ego vestris omnes triumphos meos, omnia ornamenta honoris, monumenta gloriæ, laudis insignia, condi et collocari volo." Living in an enlightened age, an age of literature and science, of history, poetry and recital, the monument of Mr. Cooper exists in the minds of men, and, like other thoughts and sentiments, is transmitted from man to man in the ordinary succession of generations. While mind and memory and taste, the veneration of religion, the love of country and of good morals, continue to prevail, his remembrance will exist in the hearts of the people.

Ladies and gentlemen, my duty on this occasion is very simple. It is to signify my sense of the honour conferred on me by being called to the chair of this meeting, and to prepare you for the proceedings and the remarks which are now to succeed.

Turning to the Secretary of the Committee, (Mr. Fitz-Greene Halleck, one of the secretaries, being detained from the meeting,) Mr. Webster then said:

Dr. Griswold will now proceed to read letters that have been addressed to the Committee of friends of Mr. Cooper, by gentlemen who are not present.

The following letters were then read, the assembly receiving the names of several of the writers with applause.

From the late Dr. De Kay.

SYOSSET, L. I., *Nov. 6th*, 1851.

Dear Sir:—I perceive by the papers, that a movement is about to be made to do honour to the memory of Fenimore Cooper.

Under feelings of profound grief for the loss of a warm personal friend, and a manly, true-hearted American, I am prompted to inquire what form the public demonstration is likely to take on this occasion. Should a monument be determined upon, I would cheerfully honour your draft for $100 for this purpose.

I do not wish to appear ostentatious, or prominent in this matter, and for that reason called upon you once or twice when in town last, to confer with you personally, as those matters appear to me better arranged verbally than by writing.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAS. E. DE KAY.

REV. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

From Francis Lieber, LL. D.

COLUMBIA, S. C., *Feb.*, 1852.

Dear Sir:—I regret very much that I cannot possibly accept your kind invitation. Were I within any reasonable distance from New York, I should certainly join you, thus to pay my humble though sincere respect to a departed fellow-writer.

Had I any voice in this matter, which I know I have not, I would express my hope that the monument be erected in New York and not in Washington. In New York his monument will be part and parcel of a living organism, as the Raphael is over the altar; in Washington it would be like a great picture in a gallery, losing half its value because out of place. Washington never was, never will be, and never was intended to be, a London or Paris. It is but the Frankfort of the United States. New York will be, socially, the capital. In New York he lived, and in New York the monument would also be a striking proof that old difficulties have been buried and long forgotten. Erect it in New York and give it to your noble son, Crawford, to execute it—the most poetic of our sculptors. Have you seen his plan of the Richmond monument? But pardon me, I am perhaps presumptuous.

I send you by this mail a trifle. Your very obedient,

F. LIEBER.

REV. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD.

From the Hon. Lewis Cass.

WASHINGTON CITY, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Dear Sir :—I have received your letter inviting me, in the name of the Committee, to be present at the meeting proposed to be held for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements for a suitable demonstration of respect for the memory of James Fenimore Cooper.

I cannot be with you upon that occasion, but it will not be for the want of respect for his memory as a man and as an author. It would be idle for me to speak of his literary merits and his fame. His country and the world acknowledge and appreciate his claims, and the productions of his genius will go down to posterity among the noblest efforts of the age. I shall necessarily be detained here, but I trust that the result of your meeting will be a demonstration worthy of the country, and of him, though now lost to us, will ever live in the history of human greatness.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LEWIS CASS.

REV. DR. GRISWOLD.

From the Hon. Richard Rush.

SYDENHAM, near Philadelphia.

Dear Sir :—Yesterday's mail brought me your most gratifying invitation, on the part of the Committee "of friends of the late Mr. Cooper," to be present at Metropolitan Hall, in New York, on the evening of the 25th instant, when Mr. Bryant is to pronounce a discourse on the life and genius of Mr. Cooper, Mr. Webster presiding on the occasion. These names, associated with those of the Committee, Washington Irving being at its head, in further conjunction with Mr. Prescott's name, Mr. Everett's and Mr. Ticknor's, whom you also mention as intending to be present, hold out inducements of the highest kind to my acceptance of such an invitation. In proportion as I feel honoured and gratified by it, I hasten to express the sincere regret I experience at being unable to accept it, from a previous engagement. Uniting in the opinion expressed in your letter that the genius and high character of Mr. Cooper make his death a suitable occasion for beginning to honour literary distinction in this country, I rejoice to think that a movement to that effect comes forward under names so imposing in reputation and number as to afford the best pledges of success. A movement springing from so elevated a feeling, and commencing in a case so fitted to awaken public sympathy throughout our land, carries with it also my humble but most cordial and most heart-felt co-operation in wishes and hopes. May it succeed—monument and all—to the fullest extent of Fenimore Cooper's

merits as an author. And let it lay to heart, that, to whatever height our political consideration may tower in the world, whatever is, or is to be our renown as a nation, its most enduring fame will rest on our great names in the field of letters and science. It is their works that will survive and continue to shine out, when other vestiges of our greatness and glory will have disappeared.

Fully appreciating the honour of this invitation, and desiring to tender through you my grateful acknowledgments to the committee,

I beg you, my dear sir, to believe me, with great respect,

Your obliged and obedient servant,

RICHARD RUSH.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

From Professor Henry Reed.

Philadelphia, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Dear Sir:—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th inst., inviting me, on behalf of the Committee, to attend the proposed meeting of the friends of the late James Fenimore Cooper.

I was glad to learn that it is in contemplation to erect a statue of Mr. Cooper. It will be, if I am not mistaken, the first tribute of the kind paid in our country to the memory of a man of *letters;* and it may, therefore, be hailed as a proof a growing national respect for the labourers of literature.

In the younger days of American art, public gratitude was fain to be content with the monumental slab, or obelisk, or column, as memorials of the distinguished dead; but now, when it can call to its service the genius of a Greenough, or of our other eminent sculptors, the *statue* is the more appropriate as as it is the far more expressive memento.

It would give me great pleasure to attend the proposed meeting, and to be a listener to Mr. Bryant's discourse, but a protracted illness, which still keeps me a prisoner within doors, puts it out of my power.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY REED.

Rev. R. W. Griswold.

From Hon. James Hall.

Cincinnati, Ohio, *Feb. 14th*, 1852.

My Dear Sir:—I have had the honour of receiving your letter of the 9th inst., inviting me to be present at Metropolitan Hall, on the evening of the 24th inst., to participate in the proceedings which may then take place, to render honour to the memory of James Fenimore Cooper. The great distance of my residence, and the pressing nature of my engagements at

home, alone prevents me from uniting in a work which has my entire approbation, and enlists my deepest sympathy. The merits of Mr. Cooper as a writer, and as a successful pioneer in American literature, entitle his memory to the highest honours which his countrymen, and especially the writers of his country, can render. I shall not be able to be present in person the evening of the 24th, but will be with you in feeling and sentiment, and will consider myself honoured in being permitted to contribute to this excellent design, in any form which may be efficient and acceptable. I beg the Committee to command my services if in any way they can be made useful. Very truly, yours,

JAMES HALL.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold, &c.

From Herman Melville.

Pittsfield, Mass., *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Gentlemen:—I have been honoured by receiving an official invitation to attend the Cooper Demonstration, to be held in New York on the 24th of this month. My very considerable distance from the city, connected with other reasons, will prevent my compliance. But I rejoice that there will not be wanting many better, though not more zealous, men than myself, to unite on that occasion, in doing honour to a memory so very dear, not only to American literature, but to the American nation.

I never had the honour of knowing, or even seeing, Mr. Cooper personally; so that, through my past ignorance of his person, the man, though dead, is still as living to me as ever. And this is very much; for his works are among the earliest I can remember, as in my boyhood producing a vivid and awakening power upon my mind.

It always much pained me, that for any reason, in his latter years, his fame at home should have apparently received a slight, temporary clouding, from some very paltry accidents, incident more or less to the general career of letters. But whatever possible things in Mr. Cooper may have seemed to have in some degree provoked the occasional treatment he received, it is certain that he possessed not the slightest weaknesses but those which are only noticeable as the almost infallible indices of pervading greatness. He was a great, robust-souled man, all whose merits are not seen, yet fully appreciated. But a grateful posterity will take the best care of Fenimore Cooper.

Assured that your demonstration cannot but prove a noble one, equally worthy of its illustrious object and the numerous living celebrities who will partake in it, I am, very respectfully, yours,

HERMAN MELVILLE.

To the Committee, &c.

From William H. Prescott, Esq.

Boston, *Feb.* 23*d*, 1852.

My Dear Irving:—I received yesterday, by Dr. Griswold, your friendly summons to attend the celebration in honour of Cooper, on Wednesday next. It is with much regret that I find myself unable to comply with it, as certain family arrangements, which I have explained to Dr. Griswold, make it extremely inconvenient to leave town the present week.

I do regret sincerely that I cannot take any share in paying this tribute of respect to an illustrious countryman. I have seen it stated in some of your journals that his character as a writer was not fully appreciated here at the North. I believe there is some misapprehension in this. But at all events, any criticism on petty defects will now be lost in admiration of the results of a life which, for the last thirty years or more, has been steadily devoted to letters—results in which every American must take an honest pride. For surely no one has succeeded like Cooper in the portraiture of American character, taken in its broadest sense, of the civilized and of the uncivilized man, or has given such glowing and eminently faithful pictures of American scenery. His writings are instinct with the spirit of nationality, shown not less in those devoted to sober fact than in the sportive inventions of his inexhaustible fancy. His merits have been admitted not only wherever the English language is spoken, but all over Europe, as every traveller knows who has seen the translations of Cooper in the different languages of the Continent, holding their place beside those of the great masters of English literature.

There is no one, I am sure, in this country, from the north to the south, who does not look on the fame of Cooper as the property of the nation, or who would not willingly join in any testimony of respect that may be shown to his memory. I, for one, most heartily do so.

I am glad to learn that the subscriptions to the statue proposed to be erected are not confined to your own state. They certainly ought not to be so limited. Understanding this from Dr. Griswold, I take this occasion to enclose a draft, payable to your order, for a small sum, which I pray you to add to the general fund.

I am glad to learn that your own health has been good of late. Long may it be before you, too, join the company of the immortals.

With my best wishes for your prosperity and happiness,

I remain, my dear sir, faithfully yours,

WM. H. PRESCOTT.

Washington Irving, Esq.

From Richard H. Dana

Boston, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Gentlemen:—The invitation to be present at the meeting appointed for the evening of the 24th, reached me a few days since.

I deeply regret that it will not be in my power to make one in the number of those who will come together to pay their tribute of respect to the memory of the late James Fenimore Cooper. While something more than courtesy long shown to me by Mr. Cooper, has made his loss like a private grief to me, I am aware that there will be many present whose feelings must be the same with mine; and it would be grateful to me if, like them, I could bring my treasured sorrow to place with theirs, an offering to the one common object of our regard and love.

As we grow old, our excited admiration of genius (while, perhaps, no less justly apprehensive than at first) calms down, and our thoughts turn oftener towards the moral nature of the man. Many of us can remember how we were *stirred* on the first appearance of the "Spy," and how we connected the *man* with his work—for then our writers were few, and what they wrote brought them with the interest and life of individuality before our minds. We have all since that time threaded the forests with Cooper, and sailed with him over the seas. But do we not (at least at such a time as this) love more to dwell upon his open, manly, energetic nature, and upon that self-reliance and civil courage (much too rare amongst us) which would, with equal freedom, speak out in the face of the people, whether they were friendly or adverse?

Still, it is the humble, childlike trust, shining out in the closing day of this man of so firm a spirit, which most wins us as it sheds its religious light through the gathering shadows of death, and bids us watch for a new dawn. And is there not something hopeful in the reflection, that the first assembling of our literary men should be for a purpose so sacred as that of honouring one of their dead? For a common sorrow makes the closest brotherhood, and death bids the living live in love, if they would pass in peace. With true sympathy and regard,

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,

RICH'D H. DANA.

Rufus W. Griswold and Fitz-Greene Halleck, &c.

From Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Concord, Mass.

Dear Sir:—I am very unwilling to lose the occasion you offer me, both of hearing the celebration of Mr. Cooper's genius, and of meeting with so many excellent persons who wish to honour his memory. But my engagements, though not important, are not easily set aside. . . . . .

I never had the good fortune to see Mr. Cooper; but I have, in common with almost all who speak English, an old debt to him of happy days, on the first appearance of the Pioneers. And, when I remember the unanimity with which that national novel was greeted, I perceive that the whole population is interested in your design, and that the difficulty of the committee will be, not how to draw, but how to exclude.

I am glad the suggestion of erecting a statue has prevailed, and I shall be obliged to you to give me an opportunity of adding my contribution, when it is time. Respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. W. EMERSON.

R. W. Griswold, &c.

From Nathaniel Hawthorne.

West Newton, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Dear Sir:—I greatly regret that circumstances render it impossible for me to be present on the occasion of Mr. Bryant's discourse in honour of James Fenimore Cooper. No man has a better right to be present than myself, if many years of most sincere and unwavering admiration of Mr. Cooper's writings can establish a claim. It is gratifying to observe the earnestness with which the literary men of our country unite in paying honour to the deceased; and it may not be too much to hope that, in the eyes of the public at large, American literature may henceforth acquire a weight and value, which have not heretofore been conceded to it: time and death have begun to hallow it.

Very respectfully yours,

NATH'L HAWTHORNE.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold, &c.

From the Hon. Charles Sumner.

Washington, *Feb. 22d*, 1852.

My Dear Sir:—It is not in my power to be present at the proposed demonstration in memory of the late Mr. Cooper. But I am glad of the opportunity afforded by the invitation with which I have been honoured, to express my regard for his name and my joy that he lived and wrote.

As an author of clear and manly prose, as a pourtrayer to the life of scenes on land or sea, as a master of the keys to human feelings and as a beneficent contributor to the general fund of happiness, he is remembered with delight.

As a patriot who loved his country, who illustrated its history, who advanced its character abroad, and, by his genius, won for it the unwilling regard of foreign nations, he deserves a place in the hearts of the American people.

I have seen his works in cities of France, Italy, and Germany. In all these countries he was read and admired. Thus by his pen American intervention was peacefully, inoffensively, and triumphantly carried into the heart of the European Continent.

In honouring him we exalt literature and the thrice blessed arts of peace. Our country will learn anew from your demonstration that there are glories other than those of state or of war.

I have the honour to be, dear sir, your obedient servant.

CHARLES SUMNER.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

From Henry W. Longfellow.

Cambridge, Mass.

My Dear Sir :—If any thing could draw me away from my friends, at this cold season, it would be your friendly letter and the occasion which produced it.

It would give me very sincere pleasure to be present on the 25th, to hear Mr. Bryant's discourse, and join you in paying honour to Cooper's memory. The country owes him a great debt of gratitude, and all who are of the guild of authorship should show the most alacrity in paying it. I was in no country of Europe where the name of Cooper was not familiarly known. In some of them he stands as almost the sole representative of our literature; and knowing this, I should take great delight in listening to his eulogy from the lips of Bryant. But alas! my College engagements are so imperative, that I cannot get away at this season even for a couple of days. Pray express my regrets to your Committee, and believe me, Very sincerely yours,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW.

Fitz-Greene Halleck, Esq.

From Francis Parkman, Jr.

Boston, Mass.

Dear Sir :—I very much regret that I cannot attend the proposed meeting at Metropolitan Hall on the 25th. It is an honour to the national character, and a good augury for the national literature that such a tribute should be offered to the memory of the most original and truly American of our authors. For myself, I have always felt a special admiration for Cooper's writings. They were my chosen favourites as a boy, and though it is at least nine or ten years since I opened them, yet the scenes and characters of several of his novels have been so stamped by the potency of his art upon my mind that I sometimes find it difficult to separate them distinctly from the recollections of my own past ex-

periences. I may say, without exaggeration, that Cooper has had an influence in determining the course of my life and pursuits. It would give me high satisfaction, if I were able, to join on this occasion in doing homage to his genius. Believe me, very sincerely, yours,

F. PARKMAN, Jr.

Rev. Dr. Griswold.

From Francis L. Hawks, D. D.

New York, *Feb. 25th*, 1852.

Dear Sir:—I cannot withhold the expression of my regret, that circumstances will prevent my joining in this tribute of respect, to be paid this evening, to the memory of Mr. Cooper; for it is a tribute alike due to the dead and honourable to the living.

I could, however, do little more than by my presence bear my humble testimony to the moral and intellectual worth of one whose most enduring monument will be found in his writings.

Yet we owe it to ourselves to rear a memorial that may perpetuate our sense of his worth; and it is a gratifying reflection, that living, as we do, in an age and country where we are of necessity obliged to travel on the path of what is termed "utilitarianism," in labouring on what is material, and subduing a continent for the uses of civilized man, we yet find cheering symptoms of national progress in another direction, in the fact that a public meeting can be held to do honour to the triumphs of mind in the field of pure literature. Very respectfully,

FRANCIS L. HAWKS.

Rev. Dr. Griswold.

From Alfred B. Street.

Albany, *Feb. 21st*, 1852.

My Dear Sir:—After an absence from home, your letter, kindly inviting my presence at Metropolitan Hall, on the evening of the 24th inst., is received. You need not be assured, my dear sir, that I agree heartily with the movement to do honour to James Fenimore Cooper—that great man whom America produced, not for herself alone but the world.

Nothing can be more just and right than to erect a monument to him. It is not needed, to be sure, to perpetuate his memory, for his works will do that, but it will serve as a token of the respect and esteem of his admiring countrymen.

Your invitation gives me the greatest pleasure, and if my duties at the State Library will possibly allow me, I will be present at the proceedings. Believe me, yours, very truly and sincerely,

ALFRED B. STREET.

Rev. Dr. Griswold.

From Sam'l F. B. Morse.

POUGHKEEPSIE, *February 23d*, 1852.

My Dear Sir :—I truly regret that circumstances over which I have no control, prevent my participation in the services commemorative of the character, literary and moral, of my lamented friend, the late James Fenimore Cooper. I can scarcely yet realize the melancholy fact, that he is no longer with us, for the announcement of his death came upon me most unexpectedly. I can truly say that the pleasure of years of close intimacy was never for a moment clouded by the slightest coolness. We were in daily, almost hourly, intercourse while in Paris during the eventful years of 1831, 1832. I never met with a more sincere, warm-hearted, constant friend. No man came nearer to the ideal I had formed of a truly high-minded man. If he was at times severe or caustic in his remarks on others, it was when excited by the exhibition of the little arts of little minds. His own frank and open nature instinctively recoiled from contact with them, though found in the saloons of ambassadors or the halls of royalty. He was an ardent, uncompromising friend of his country's institutions, and defended them when attacked at the risk of the threatened loss of fame and fortune.

His liberality, obedient to his generous sympathies, was scarcely bounded by prudence; he was always ready to lend his purse and his pen to struggling merit, and many who are now reaping the fruits of his early kindness, will have learned of his decease with the most poignant sorrow.

Although unable to be with you, I trust the Committee will not overlook me when they collect the funds for the contemplated monument. With sincere respect, your most obedient servant,

SAM'L F. B. MORSE.

REV. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD, &c.

From John P. Kennedy.

BALTIMORE, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Dear Sir :—Your invitation reached me too late to enable me to participate in the meeting which has been held at the City Hall in your city, to render appropriate honours to the memory of Mr. Cooper.

I rejoice to see what has been done and what you propose to do. It is due to the eminent merits of Fenimore Cooper, that there should be an impressive public recognition of the loss which our country has sus-

tained in his death. He stood confessedly at the head of a most attractive and popular department of our literature, in which his extraordinary success had raised him up a fame that became national. The country claimed it as its own. This fame was acknowledged and appreciated not only wherever the English tongue is the medium of thought, but every where amongst the most civilized nations of Europe.

Our literature, in the lifetime of the present generation, has grown to a maturity which has given it a distinction and honourable place in that aggregate which forms national character. No man has done more in his sphere to elevate and dignify that character than Fenimore Cooper: no man is more worthy than he, for such services, of the highest honours appropriate to a literary benefactor. His genius has contributed a rich fund to the instruction and delight of his countrymen, which will long be preserved amongst the choicest treasures of American letters, and will equally induce to render our national literature attractive to other nations. We owe a memorial and a monument to the man who has achieved this. This work is the peculiar privilege of the distinguished scholars of New York, and I have no doubt will be warmly applauded, and if need be, assisted, by every scholar and friend of letters in the Union.

With the best wishes for the success of this enterprise, I am, my dear sir, very truly yours,

JOHN P. KENNEDY.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.

From William Gilmore Simms.

Charleston, S. C., *Feb. 15th*, 1852.

My Dear Sir:—To you who have conversed with me respecting Cooper, and who have read those essays and criticisms in which I have attempted to illustrate and define his characteristics, it is scarcely necessary to say that no literary man in this country ever honoured his genius and patriotism more than myself. If I can do any thing here in the South to promote your purposes in this matter call upon me. But your letter reaches me just as I am preparing to follow my family up to the plantation, and it is quite impossible to avail myself of the tendered honour and satisfaction of meeting so many of our eminent men on this most interesting occasion. Yours, very sincerely,

W. G. SIMMS.

Rev. Dr. Griswold.

From Mr. John R. Thompson.

RICHMOND, *Feb. 20th*, 1852.

Gentlemen :—I am honoured by your letter, inviting me to be with you on the evening of the 24th of February, to unite in your fitting demonstration of respect for the memory of the late James Fenimore Cooper. An occasion of such peculiar interest rarely occurs, and it is therefore with very great regret that I am compelled to forego the satisfaction of being present. In offering you my thanks for the invitation you have given me, which was to myself so unexpected, I cannot forbear saying how much, in my poor judgment, the testimonial you propose does honour to yourselves as men, and as votaries of that noble pursuit of letters, of which, in America, Mr. Cooper was the most distinguished and successful follower. The arrangements are all in keeping with the excellent design, and contemplate such tributes as might have been paid to a fallen philosopher, by his brethren of the schools, in the grandest days of Greece. The presence of one of the greatest of living statesmen, as presiding officer, and the most delightful of living essayists, while it may add nothing to the fame of the dead, will lend a rare dignity to the occasion, and a discourse from the lips of one of the most exalted of living poets, while it may not, in any degree, raise your estimate of the genius that has been withdrawn from the world, will yet worthily illustrate the character and intellect of "the prose poet of the woods and seas," whose loss has been lamented wherever literature is valued among men. I have the honour to be, gentlemen, with high regard, very sincerely yours, JOHN R. THOMPSON.

REV. RUFUS W. GRISWOLD and FITZ-GREENE HALLECK

From Mr. Charles G. Leland.

PHILADELPHIA, *Feb. 22d*, 1852.

My Dear Sir :—I regret extremely that business prevents my accepting your invitation to the meeting in honour of Cooper. As any information, however unimportant, relative to our illustrious novelist may not be without value at this moment, I take the liberty of communicating a few facts relative to the dissemination of his works in Germany. So long ago as 1827, her most eminent critic spoke of Cooper's great popularity among the people of Germany. Several translations of most of his works have appeared, some of them executed by celebrated men, who would undertake translations of none but authors of the highest character for genius. His "entire works, translated by several persons," were published at Frankfort in 1827, in 250 parts. Of this collection a second large edition appeared in 1834, and a third in 1851.

All his works, even more than those of Shakspeare or Scott, are household words to the German people. These facts illustrate a popularity enjoyed in that country by no other American. Indeed, our Cooper, I observed generally, during my residence in Germany, was by the general consent ranked among the greatest masters of romantic fiction produced in any country or age. I hope the proposed tribute will be worthy of New York. Respectfully yours, CHARLES G. LELAND.

Rev. Dr. Griswold.

The reading of the Committee's correspondence having been concluded, Mr. Webster rose, and bowing, said:

Mr. Bryant will now proceed to pronounce a discourse on the Life, Character, and Genius of James Fenimore Cooper.

Mr. Bryant came forward, greeted by the cheers of the assembly, and read as follows:

It is now somewhat more than a year, since the friends of James Fenimore Cooper, in this city, were planning to give a public dinner in his honour. It was intended as an expression both of the regard they bore him personally, and of the pride they took in the glory his writings had reflected on the American name. We thought of what we should say in his hearing; in what terms, worthy of him and of us, we should speak of the esteem in which we held him, and of the interest we felt in a fame which had already penetrated to the remotest nook of the earth inhabited by civilized man.

To-day we assemble for a sadder purpose: to pay to the dead some part of the honours then intended for the living. We bring our offering, but he is not here who should receive it; in his stead are vacancy and silence; there is no eye to brighten at our words, and no voice to answer. "It is an empty office that we perform," said Virgil, in his melodious verses, when commemorating the virtues of the young Mar-

cellus, and bidding flowers be strewn, with full hands, over his early grave. We might apply the expression to the present occasion, but it would be true in part only. We can no longer do any thing for him who is departed, but we may do what will not be without fruit to those who remain. It is good to occupy our thoughts with the example of great talents in conjunction with great virtues. His genius has passed away with him; but we may learn, from the history of his life, to employ the faculties we possess with useful activity and noble aims; we may copy his magnanimous frankness, his disdain of every thing that wears the faintest semblance of deceit, his refusal to comply with current abuses, and the courage with which, on all occasions, he asserted what he deemed truth, and combated what he thought error.

The circumstances of Cooper's early life were remarkably suited to confirm the natural hardihood and manliness of his character, and to call forth and exercise that extraordinary power of observation, which accumulated the materials afterwards wielded and shaped by his genius. His father, while an inhabitant of Burlington, in New Jersey, on the pleasant banks of the Delaware, was the owner of large possessions on the borders of the Otsego Lake, in our own state, and here, in the newly-cleared fields, he built, in 1786, the first house in Cooperstown. To this home, Cooper, who was born in Burlington, in the year 1789, was conveyed in his infancy, and here, as he informs us in his preface to the *Pioneers*, his first impressions of the external world were obtained. Here he passed his childhood, with the vast forest around him, stretching up the mountains that overlook the lake, and far beyond, in a region where the Indian yet roamed, and the

white hunter, half Indian in his dress and mode of life, sought his game,—a region in which the bear and the wolf were yet hunted, and the panther, more formidable than either, lurked in the thickets, and tales of wanderings in the wilderness, and encounters with these fierce animals, beguiled the length of the winter nights. Of this place, Cooper, although early removed from it to pursue his studies, was an occasional resident throughout his life, and here his last years were wholly passed.

At the age of thirteen he was sent to Yale College, where, notwithstanding his extreme youth,—for, with the exception of the poet, Hillhouse, he was the youngest of his class, and Hillhouse was afterwards withdrawn,—his progress in his studies is said to have been honourable to his talents. He left the college, after a residence of three years, and became a midshipman in the United States navy. Six years he followed the sea, and there yet wanders, among those who are fond of literary anecdote, a story of the young sailor who, in the streets of one of the English ports, attracted the curiosity of the crowd, by explaining to his companions a Latin motto in some public place. That during this period he made himself master of the knowledge and the imagery which he afterwards employed to so much advantage in his romances of the sea, the finest ever written, is a common and obvious remark; but it has not been, so far as I know, observed that from the discipline of a seaman's life he may have derived much of his readiness and fertility of invention, much of his skill in surrounding the personages of his novels with imaginary perils, and rescuing them by probable expedients. Of all pursuits, the life of a sailor is that which familiarizes men to danger in its most fearful shapes, most cultivates presence

of mind, and most effectually calls forth the resources of prompt and fearless dexterity by which imminent evil is avoided.

In 1811, Cooper, having resigned his post as midshipman, began the year by marrying Miss Delancey, sister of the present bishop of the diocese of Western New York, and entered upon a domestic life happily passed to its close. He went to live at Mamaroneck, in the county of Westchester, and while here he wrote and published the first of his novels, entitled *Precaution*. Concerning the occasion of writing this work, it is related, that once, as he was reading an English novel to Mrs. Cooper, who has, within a short time past, been laid in the grave beside her illustrious husband, and of whom we may now say, that her goodness was no less eminent than his genius, he suddenly laid down the book, and said, "I believe I could write a better myself." Almost immediately he composed a chapter of a projected work of fiction, and read it to the same friendly judge, who encouraged him to finish it, and when it was completed, suggested its publication. Of this he had at the time no intention, but he was at length induced to submit the manuscript to the examination of the late Charles Wilkes, of this city, in whose literary opinions he had great confidence. Mr. Wilkes advised that it should be published, and to these circumstances we owe it that Cooper became an author.

I confess I have merely dipped into this work. The experiment was made with the first edition, deformed by a strange punctuation — a profusion of commas, and other pauses, which puzzled and repelled me. Its author, many years afterwards, revised and republished it, correcting this

fault, and some faults of style also, so that to a casual inspection, it appeared almost another work. It was a professed delineation of English manners, though the author had then seen nothing of English society. It had, however, the honour of being adopted by the country whose manners it described, and, being early republished in Great Britain, passed from the first for an English novel. I am not unwilling to believe what is said of it, that it contained a promise of the powers which its author afterwards put forth.

Thirty years ago, in the year 1821, and in the thirty-second of his life, Cooper published the first of the works by which he will be known to posterity, the *Spy*. It took the reading world by a kind of surprise; its merit was acknowledged by a rapid sale; the public read with eagerness and the critics wondered. Many withheld their commendations on account of defects in the plot or blemishes in the composition, arising from want of practice, and some waited till they could hear the judgment of European readers. Yet there were not wanting critics in this country, of whose good opinion any author in any part of the world might be proud, who spoke of it in the terms it deserved. "Are you not delighted," wrote a literary friend to me, who has since risen to high distinction as a writer, both in verse and in prose, "are you not delighted with the *Spy*, as a work of infinite spirit and genius?" In that word genius lay the explanation of the hold which the work had taken on the minds of men. What it had of excellence was peculiar and unborrowed; its pictures of life, whether in repose or activity, were drawn, with broad lights and shadows, immediately from living originals in nature or in his own imagination. To him, whatever he

described was true; it was made a reality to him by the strength with which he conceived it. His power in the delineation of character was shown in the principal personage of his story, Harvey Birch, on whom, though he has chosen to employ him in the ignoble office of a spy, and endowed him with the qualities necessary to his profession,—extreme circumspection, fertility in stratagem, and the art of concealing his real character,—qualities which, in conjunction with selfishness and greediness, make the scoundrel, he has bestowed the virtues of generosity, magnanimity, an intense love of country, a fidelity not to be corrupted, and a disinterestedness beyond temptation. Out of this combination of qualities he has wrought a character which is a favourite in all nations, and with all classes of mankind.

It is said that if you cast a pebble into the ocean, at the mouth of our harbour, the vibration made in the water passes gradually on till it strikes the icy barriers of the deep at the south pole. The spread of Cooper's reputation is not confined within narrower limits. The *Spy* is read in all the written dialects of Europe, and in some of those of Asia. The French, immediately after its first appearance, gave it to the multitudes who read their far-diffused language, and placed it among the first works of its class. It was rendered into Castilian, and passed into the hands of those who dwell under the beams of the Southern Cross. At length it passed the eastern frontier of Europe, and the latest record I have seen of its progress towards absolute universality, is contained in a statement of the *International Magazine*, derived, I presume, from its author, that in 1847 it was published in a Persian translation at Ispahan. Before this time, I doubt not,

they are reading it in some of the languages of Hindostan, and, if the Chinese ever translated any thing, it would be in the hands of the many millions who inhabit the far Cathay.

I have spoken of the hesitation which American critics felt in admitting the merits of the *Spy*, on account of crudities in the plot or the composition, some of which no doubt really existed. An exception must be made in favour of the *Port Folio*, which, in a notice written by Mrs. Sarah Hall, mother of the editor of that periodical, and author of *Conversations on the Bible*, gave the work a cordial welcome; and Cooper, as I am informed, never forgot this act of timely and ready kindness.

It was perhaps favourable to the immediate success of the *Spy*, that Cooper had few American authors to divide with him the public attention. That crowd of clever men and women who now write for the magazines, who send out volumes of essays, sketches, and poems, and who supply the press with novels, biographies and historical works, were then, for the most part, either stammering their lessons in the schools, or yet unborn. Yet it is worthy of note, that just about the time that the *Spy* made its appearance, the dawn of what we now call our literature was just breaking. The concluding number of Dana's *Idle Man*, a work neglected at first, but now numbered among the best things of the kind in our language, was issued in the same month. The *Sketch Book* was then just completed; the world was admiring it, and its author was meditating *Bracebridge Hall*. Miss Sedgwick, about the same time, made her first essay in that charming series of novels of domestic life in New England, which have gained her so high a reputation. Percival, now unhappily

silent, had just put to press a volume of poems. I have a copy to an edition of Halleck's *Fanny*, published in the same year; the poem of *Yamoyden*, by Eastburn and Sands, appeared almost simultaneously with it. Livingston was putting the finishing hand to his *Report on the Penal Code of Louisiana*, a work written with such grave, persuasive eloquence, that it belongs as much to our literature as to our jurisprudence. Other contemporaneous American works there were, now less read. Paul Allen's poem of *Noah* was just laid on the counters of the booksellers. Arden published at the same time, in this city, a translation of Ovid's *Tristia*, in heroic verse, in which the complaints of the effeminate Roman poet were rendered with great fidelity to the original, and sometimes not without beauty. If I may speak of myself, it was in that year that I timidly entrusted to the winds and waves of public opinion a small cargo of my own—a poem entitled *The Ages*, and half a dozen shorter ones, in a thin duodecimo volume, printed at Cambridge.

We had, at the same time, works of elegant literature, fresh from the press of Great Britain, which are still read and admired. Barry Cornwall, then a young suitor for fame, published in the same year his *Marcia Colonna;* Byron, in the full strength and fertility of his genius, gave the readers of English his tragedy of *Marino Faliero*, and was in the midst of his spirited controversy with Bowles concerning the poetry of Pope. The *Spy* had to sustain a comparison with Scott's *Antiquary*, published simultaneously with it, and with Lockhart's *Valerius*, which seems to me one of the most remarkable works of fiction ever composed.

In 1823, and in his thirty-fourth year, Cooper brought out his novel of the *Pioneers*, the scene of which was laid on the borders of his own beautiful lake. In a recent survey of Mr. Cooper's works, by one of his admirers, it is intimated that the reputation of this work may have been in some degree factitious. I cannot think so; I cannot see how such a work could fail of becoming, sooner or later, a favourite. It was several years after its first appearance that I read the *Pioneers*, and I read it with a delighted astonishment. Here, said I to myself, is the poet of rural life in this country—our Hesiod, our Theocritus, except that he writes without the restraint of numbers, and is a greater poet than they. In the *Pioneers*, as in a moving picture, are made to pass before us the hardy occupations and spirited amusements of a prosperous settlement, in a fertile region, encompassed for leagues around with the primeval wilderness of woods. The seasons in their different aspects, bringing with them their different employments; forests falling before the axe; the cheerful population, with the first mild day of spring, engaged in the sugar-orchards; the chase of the deer through the deep woods, and into the lake; turkey-shootings, during the Christmas holidays, in which the Indian marksman vied for the prize of skill with the white man; swift sleigh-rides under the bright winter sun, and perilous encounters with wild animals in the forests; these, and other scenes of rural life, drawn, as Cooper knew how to draw them, in the bright and healthful colouring of which he was master, are interwoven with a regular narrative of human fortunes, not unskilfully constructed; and how could such a work be otherwise than popular?

In the *Pioneers*, Leatherstocking is first introduced—a

philosopher of the woods, ignorant of books, but instructed in all that nature, without the aid of science, could reveal to the man of quick senses and inquiring intellect, whose life has been passed under the open sky, and in companionship with a race whose animal perceptions are the acutest and most cultivated of which there is any example. But Leatherstocking has higher qualities; in him there is a genial blending of the gentlest virtues of the civilized man with the better nature of the aboriginal tribes; all that in them is noble, generous, and ideal, is adopted into his own kindly character, and all that is evil is rejected. But why should I attempt to analyze a character so familiar? Leatherstocking is acknowledged, on all hands, to be one of the noblest, as well as most striking and original creations of fiction. In some of his subsequent novels, Cooper—for he had not yet attained to the full maturity of his powers—heightened and ennobled his first conception of the character, but in the *Pioneers* it dazzled the world with the splendour of novelty.

His next work was the *Pilot*, in which he showed how, from the vicissitudes of a life at sea, its perils and escapes, from the beauty and terrors of the great deep, from the working of a vessel on a long voyage, and from the frank, brave and generous, but peculiar character of the seaman, may be drawn materials of romance by which the minds of men may be as deeply moved as by any thing in the power of romance to present. In this walk, Cooper has had many disciples, but no rival. All who have since written romances of the sea have been but travellers in a country of which he was the great discoverer, and none of them all seemed to have loved a ship as Cooper loved it, or have been able so strongly to in-

terest all classes of readers in its fortunes. Among other personages drawn with great strength in the *Pilot*, is the general favourite, Tom Coffin, the thorough seaman, with all the virtues, and one or two of the infirmities of his profession, superstitious, as seamen are apt to be, yet whose superstitions strike us as but an irregular growth of his devout recognition of the Power who holds the ocean in the hollow of his hand; true-hearted, gentle, full of resources, collected in danger, and at last calmly perishing at the post of duty, with the vessel he has long guided, by what I may call a great and magnanimous death. His rougher and coarser companion, Boltrope, is drawn with scarcely less skill, and with a no less vigorous hand.

The *Pioneers* is not Cooper's best tale of the American forest, nor the *Pilot*, perhaps, in all respects, his best tale of the sea; yet, if he had ceased to write here, the measure of his fame would, possibly, have been scarcely less ample than it now is. Neither of them is far below the best of his productions, and in them appear the two most remarkable creations of his imagination—two of the most remarkable characters in all fiction.

It was about this time that my acquaintance with Cooper began, an acquaintance of more than a quarter of a century, in which his deportment towards me was that of unvaried kindness. He then resided a considerable part of the year in this city, and here he had founded a weekly club, to which many of the most distinguished men of the place belonged. Of the members who have since passed away, were Chancellor Kent, the jurist; Wiley, the intelligent and liberal bookseller;

Henry D. Sedgwick, always active in schemes of benevolence; Jarvis, the painter, a man of infinite humour, whose jests awoke inextinguishable laughter; De Kay, the naturalist; Sands, the poet; Jacob Harvey, whose genial memory is cherished by many friends. Of those who are yet living was Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph; Durand, then one of the first of engravers, and now no less illustrious as a painter; Henry James Anderson, whose acquirements might awaken the envy of the ripest scholars of the old world; Halleck, the poet and wit; Verplanck, who has given the world the best edition of Shakspeare for general readers; Dr. King, now at the head of Columbia College, and his two immediate predecessors in that office. I might enlarge the list with many other names of no less distinction. The army and navy contributed their proportion of members, whose names are on record in our national history. Cooper when in town was always present, and I remember being struck with the inexhaustible vivacity of his conversation and the minuteness of his knowledge, in every thing which depended upon acuteness of observation and exactness of recollection. I remember, too, being somewhat startled, coming as I did from the seclusion of a country life, with a certain emphatic frankness in his manner, which, however, I came at last to like and to admire. The club met in the hotel called Washington Hall, the site of which is now occupied by part of the circuit of Stewart's marble building.

Lionel Lincoln, which cannot be ranked among the successful productions of Cooper, was published in 1825; and in the year following appeared the *Last of the Mohicans*, which more than recovered the ground lost by its predecessor. In

this work, the construction of the narrative has signal defects, but it is one of the triumphs of the author's genius, that he makes us unconscious of them while we read. It is only when we have had time to awake from the intense interest in which he has held us by the vivid reality of his narrative, and have begun to search for faults in cold blood, that we are able to find them. In the *Last of the Mohicans* we have a bolder portraiture of Leatherstocking than in the *Pioneers*.

This work was published in 1826, and in the same year Cooper sailed with his family for Europe. He left New York as one of the vessels of war, described in his romances of the sea, goes out of port, amidst the thunder of a parting salute from the big guns on the batteries. A dinner was given him just before his departure, attended by most of the distinguished men of the city, at which Peter A. Jay presided, and Dr. King addressed him in terms which some then thought too glowing, but which would now seem sufficiently temperate, expressing the good wishes of his friends, and dwelling on the satisfaction they promised themselves in possessing so illustrious a representative of American literature in the old world. Cooper was scarcely in France when he remembered his friends of the weekly club, and sent frequent missives to be read at its meetings; but the club missed its founder, went into a decline, and not long afterwards quietly expired.

The first of Cooper's novels published after leaving America was the *Prairie*, which appeared early in 1827, a work, with the admirers of which I wholly agree. I read it with a certain awe, an undefined sense of sublimity, such as one experiences on entering, for the first time, upon these immense

grassy deserts from which the work takes its name. The squatter and his family—that brawny old man and his large-limbed sons, living in a sort of primitive and patriarchal barbarism, sluggish on ordinary occasions, but terrible when roused, like the hurricane that sweeps the grand but monotonous wilderness in which they dwell—seem a natural growth of those ancient fields of the west. Leatherstocking, a hunter in the *Pioneers*, a warrior in the *Last of the Mohicans*, and now, in his extreme old age, a trapper on the prairie, declined in strength, but undecayed in intellect, and looking to the near close of his life, and a grave under the long grass, as calmly as the labourer at sunset looks to his evening slumber, is no less in harmony with the silent desert in which he wanders. Equally so are the Indians, still his companions, copies of the American savage somewhat idealized, but not the less a part of the wild nature in which they have their haunts.

Before the year closed, Cooper had given the world another nautical tale, the *Red Rover*, which, with many, is a greater favourite than the *Pilot*, and with reason, perhaps, if we consider principally the incidents, which are conducted and described with a greater mastery over the springs of pity and terror.

It happened to Cooper while he was abroad, as it not unfrequently happens to our countrymen, to hear the United States disadvantageously compared with Europe. He had himself been a close observer of things both here and in the old world, and was conscious of being able to refute the detractors of his country in regard to many points. He published in 1828, after he had been two years in Europe, a series of letters, entitled *Notions of the Americans, by a Travelling*

Bachelor, in which he gave a favourable account of the working of our institutions, and vindicated his country from various flippant and ill-natured misrepresentations of foreigners. It is rather too measured in style, but is written from a mind full of the subject, and from a memory wonderfully stored with particulars. Although twenty-four years have elapsed since its publication, but little of the vindication has become obsolete.

Cooper loved his country and was proud of her history and her institutions, but it puzzles many that he should have appeared, at different times, as her eulogist and her censor. My friends, she is worthy both of praise and of blame, and Cooper was not the man to shrink from bestowing either, at what seemed to him the proper time. He defended her from detractors abroad; he sought to save her from flatterers at home. I will not say that he was in as good humour with his country when he wrote *Home as Found*, as when he wrote his *Notions of the Americans*, but this I will say, that whether he commended or censured, he did it in the sincerity of his heart, as a true American, and in the belief that it would do good. His *Notions of the Americans* were more likely to lessen than to increase his popularity in Europe, inasmuch as they were put forth without the slightest regard to European prejudices.

In 1829 he brought out the novel entitled the *Wept of Wish-ton-Wish*, one of the few of his works which we now rarely hear mentioned. He was engaged in the composition of a third nautical tale, which he afterwards published under the name of the *Water-Witch*, when the memorable revolution of the Three Days of July broke out. He saw a govern-

ment, ruling by fear and in defiance of public opinion, overthrown in a few hours, with little bloodshed; he saw the French nation, far from being intoxicated with their new liberty, peacefully addressing themselves to the discussion of the institutions under which they were to live. A work which Cooper afterwards published, his *Residence in Europe*, gives the outline of a plan of government for France, furnished by him at that time to La Fayette, with whom he was then on habits of close and daily intimacy. It was his idea to give permanence to the new order of things by associating two strong parties in its support, the friends of legitimacy and the republicans. He suggested that Henry V. should be called to the hereditary throne of France, a youth yet to be educated as the head of a free people, that the peerage should be abolished, and a legislature of two chambers established, with a constituency of at least a million and a half of electors; the senate to be chosen by the general vote, as the representatives of the entire nation, and the members of the other house to be chosen by districts, as the representatives of the local interests. To the middle ground of politics so ostentatiously occupied by Louis Philippe at the beginning of his reign, he predicted a brief duration, believing that it would speedily be merged in despotism, or supplanted by the popular rule. His prophecy has been fulfilled more amply than he could have imagined—fulfilled in both its alternatives.

In one of the controversies of that time, Cooper bore a distinguished part. The *Révue Britannique*, a periodical published in Paris, boldly affirmed the government of the United States to be one of the most expensive in the world, and its people among the most heavily taxed of mankind. This as-

sertion was supported with a certain show of proof, and the writer affected to have established the conclusion that a republic must necessarily be more expensive than a monarchy. The partisans of the court were delighted with the reasoning of the article, and claimed a triumph over our ancient friend La Fayette, who, during forty years, had not ceased to hold up the government of the United States as the cheapest in the world. At the suggestion of La Fayette, Cooper replied to this attack upon his country, in a letter which was translated into French, and together with another from General Bertrand, for many years a resident in America, was laid before the people of France.

These two letters provoked a shower of rejoinders, in which, according to Cooper, misstatements were mingled with scurrility. He commenced a series of letters on the question in dispute, which were published in the *National*, a daily sheet, and gave the first evidence of that extraordinary acuteness in controversy, which was no less characteristic of his mind than the vigour of his imagination. The enemies of La Fayette pressed into their service Mr. Leavitt Harris, of New Jersey, afterwards our *chargé d'affaires* at the court of France, but Cooper replied to Mr. Harris, in the *National* of May 2d, 1832, closing a discussion in which he had effectually silenced those who objected to our institutions on the score of economy. Of these letters, which would form an important chapter in political science, no entire copy, I have been told, is to be found in this country.

One of the consequences of earnest controversy is almost invariably personal ill-will. Cooper was told by one who held an official station under the French government, that the

part he had taken in this dispute concerning taxation, would neither be forgotten nor forgiven. The dislike he had incurred in that quarter was strengthened by his novel of the *Bravo*, published in the year 1831, while he was in the midst of his quarrel with the aristocratic party. In that work, of which he has himself justly said, that it was thoroughly American, in all that belonged to it, his object was to show how institutions, professedly created to prevent violence and wrong, become, when perverted from their natural destination, the instruments of injustice, and how, in every system which makes power the exclusive property of the strong, the weak are sure to be oppressed. The work is written with all the vigour and spirit of his best novels; the magnificent city of Venice, in which the scene of the story is laid, stands continually before the imagination, and from time to time the gorgeous ceremonies of the Venetian republic pass under our eyes, such as the marriage of the Doge with the Adriatic, and the contest of the gondolas for the prize of speed. The Bravo himself and several of the other characters are strongly conceived and distinguished, but the most remarkable of them all is the spirited and generous-hearted daughter of the jailer.

It has been said by some critics, who judge of Cooper by his failures, that he had no skill in drawing female characters. By the same process, it might, I suppose, be shown that Raphael was but an ordinary painter. It must be admitted that when Cooper drew a lady of high breeding, he was apt to pay too much attention to the formal part of her character, and to make her a mere bundle of cold proprieties. But when he places his heroines in some situation in life which leaves him nothing to do but to make them natural and true,

I know of nothing finer, nothing more attractive or more individual than the portraitures he has given us.

Figaro, the wittiest of the French periodicals, and at that time on the liberal side, commended the *Bravo;* the journals on the side of the government censured it. *Figaro* afterwards passed into the hands of the aristocratic party, and Cooper became the object of its attacks. He was not, however, a man to be driven from any purpose which he had formed, either by flattery or abuse, and both were tried with equal ill success. In 1832 he published his *Heidenmauer*, and in 1833 his *Headsman of Berne*, both with a political design similar to that of the *Bravo*, though neither of them takes the same high rank among his works.

In 1833, after a residence of seven years in different parts of Europe, but mostly in France, Cooper returned to his native country. The welcome which met him here was somewhat chilled by the effect of the attacks made upon him in France, and remembering with what zeal, and at what sacrifice of the universal acceptance which his works would otherwise have met, he had maintained the cause of his country against the wits and orators of the court party in France, we cannot wonder that he should have felt this coldness as undeserved. He published, shortly after his arrival in this country, *A Letter to his Countrymen*, in which he complained of the censures cast upon him in the American newspapers, gave a history of the part he had taken in exposing the misstatements of the *Révue Britannique*, and warned his countrymen against the too common error of resorting, with a blind deference, to foreign authorities, often swayed by national or political prejudices, for our opinions

of American authors. Going beyond this topic, he examined and reprehended the habit of applying to the interpretation of our own constitution maxims derived from the practice of other governments, particularly that of Great Britain. The importance of construing that instrument by its own principles, he illustrated by considering several points in dispute between the parties of the day, on which he gave very decided opinions.

The principal effect of this pamphlet, as it seemed to me, was to awaken in certain quarters a kind of resentment that a successful writer of fiction should presume to give lessons in politics. I meddle not here with the conclusions to which he arrived, though I must be allowed to say that they were stated and argued with great ability. In 1835 Cooper published *The Monnikins*, a satirical work, partly with a political aim, and in the same year appeared his *American Democrat*,— a view of the civil and social relations of the United States, discussing more gravely various topics touched upon in the former work, and pointing out in what respects he deemed the American people in their practice to have fallen short of the excellence of their institutions.

He found time, however, for a more genial task, that of giving to the world his observations on foreign countries. In 1836 appeared his *Sketches of Switzerland*, a series of letters in four volumes, the second part published about two months after the first, a delightful work, written in a more fluent and flexible style than his *Notions of the Americans*. The first part of *Gleanings in Europe*, giving an account of his residence in France, followed in the same year, and the second part of the same work, containing his observations on Eng-

land, was published in April, 1837. In these works, forming a series of eight volumes, he relates and describes with much of the same distinctness as in his novels; and his remarks on the manners and institutions of the different countries, often sagacious, and always peculiarly his own, derive, from their frequent reference to contemporary events, an historical interest.

In 1838 appeared *Homeward Bound*, and *Home as Found*, two satirical novels, in which Cooper held up to ridicule a certain class of conductors of the newspaper press in America. These works had not the good fortune to become popular. Cooper did not, and, because he was too deeply in earnest, perhaps would not, infuse into his satirical works that gayety without which satire becomes wearisome. I believe, however, that if they had been written by any body else they would have met with more favour; but the world knew that Cooper was able to give them something better, and would not be satisfied with any thing short of his best. Some childishly imagined that because, in the two works I have just mentioned, a newspaper editor is introduced, in whose character almost every possible vice of his profession is made to find a place, Cooper intended an indiscriminate attack upon the whole body of writers for the newspaper press, forgetting that such a portraiture was a satire only on those to whom it bore a likeness. We have become less sensitive and more reasonable of late, and the monthly periodicals make sport for their readers of the follies and ignorance of the newspaper editors, without awakening the slightest resentment; but Cooper led the way in this sort of discipline, and I remember some instances of towering indignation at his audacity expressed in the journals of that time.

The next year Cooper made his appearance before the public in a new department of writing; his *Naval History of the United States* was brought out in two octavo volumes at Philadelphia, by Carey & Lea. In writing his stories of the sea, his attention had been much turned to this subject, and his mind filled with striking incidents from expeditions and battles in which our naval commanders had been engaged. This made his task the lighter, but he gathered his materials with great industry, and with a conscientious attention to exactness, for he was not a man to take a fact for granted, or allow imagination to usurp the place of inquiry. He digested our naval annals into a narrative, written with spirit, it is true, but with that air of sincere dealing which the reader willingly takes as a pledge of its authenticity.

An abridgment of the work was afterwards prepared and published by the author. The *Edinburgh Review*, in an article professing to examine the statements both of Cooper's work and of *The History of the English Navy*, written by Mr. James, a surgeon by profession, made a violent attack upon the American historian. Unfortunately, it took James's narrative as its sole guide, and followed it implicitly. Cooper replied in the *Democratic Review* for January, 1840, and by a masterly analysis of his statements, convicting James of self-contradiction in almost every particular in which he differed from himself, refuted both James and the reviewer. It was a refutation which admitted of no rejoinder.

Scarce any thing in Cooper's life was so remarkable, or so strikingly illustrated his character, as his contest with the newspaper press. He engaged in it after provocations, many

and long endured, and prosecuted it through years with great energy, perseverance, and practical dexterity, till he was left master of the field. In what I am about to say of it, I hope I shall not give offence to any one, as I shall speak without the slightest malevolence towards those with whom he waged this controversy. Over some of them, as over their renowned adversary, the grave has now closed. Yet where shall the truth be spoken, if not beside the grave?

I have already alluded to the principal causes which provoked the newspaper attacks upon Cooper. If he had never meddled with questions of government on either side of the Atlantic, and never satirized the newspaper press, I have little doubt that he would have been spared these attacks. I cannot, however, ascribe them all, or even the greater part of them, to personal malignity. One journal followed the example of another, with little reflection, I think, in most cases, till it became a sort of fashion, not merely to decry his works, but to arraign his motives.

It is related that, in 1832, while he was at Paris, an article was shown him in an American newspaper, purporting to be a criticism on one of his works, but reflecting with much asperity on his personal character. "I care nothing," he is reported to have said, "for the criticism, but I am not indifferent to the slander. If these attacks on my character should be kept up five years after my return to America, I shall resort to the New York courts for protection." He gave the newspaper press of this state the full period of forbearance on which he had fixed, but finding that forbearance seemed to encourage assault, he sought redress in the courts of law.

When these litigations were first begun, I recollect it

seemed to me that Cooper had taken a step which would give him a great deal of trouble, and effect but little good. I said to myself—

"Alas! Leviathan is not so tamed!"

As he proceeded, however, I saw that he had understood the matter better than I. He put a hook into the nose of this huge monster, wallowing in his inky pool and bespattering the passers-by; he dragged him to the land and made him tractable. One suit followed another; one editor was sued, I think, half-a-dozen times; some of them found themselves under a second indictment before the first was tried. In vindicating himself to his readers, against the charge of publishing one libel, the angry journalist often floundered into another. The occasions of these prosecutions seem to have been always carefully considered, for Cooper was almost uniformly successful in obtaining verdicts. In a letter of his, written in February, 1843, about five years, I think, from the commencement of the first prosecutions, he says: "I have beaten every man I have sued, who has not retracted his libels."

In one of these suits, commenced against the late William L. Stone, of the *Commercial Advertiser*, and referred to the arbitration of three distinguished lawyers, he argued, himself, the question of the authenticity of his account of the battle of Lake Erie, which was the matter in dispute. I listened to his opening; it was clear, skilful, and persuasive, but his closing argument was said to be splendidly eloquent. "I have heard nothing like it," said a barrister to me, "since the days of Emmet."

Cooper behaved liberally towards his antagonists, so far

as pecuniary damages were concerned, though some of them wholly escaped their payment by bankruptcy. After, I believe, about six years of litigation, the newspaper press gradually subsided into a pacific disposition towards its adversary, and the contest closed with the account of pecuniary profit and loss, so far as he was concerned, nearly balanced. The occasion of these suits was far from honourable to those who provoked them, but the result was, I had almost said, creditable to all parties; to him, as the courageous prosecutor, to the administration of justice in this country, and to the docility of the newspaper press, which he had disciplined into good manners.

It was while he was in the midst of these litigations, that he published, in 1840, the *Pathfinder*. People had begun to think of him as a controversialist, acute, keen, and persevering, occupied with his personal wrongs and schemes of attack and defence. They were startled from this estimate of his character by the moral beauty of that glorious work—I must so call it; by the vividness and force of its delineations, by the unspoiled love of nature, apparent in every page, and by the fresh and warm emotions which every where gave life to the narrative and the dialogue. Cooper was now in his fifty-first year, but nothing which he had produced in the earlier part of his literary life was written with so much of what might seem the generous fervour of youth, or showed the faculty of invention in higher vigour. I recollect that near the time of its appearance I was informed of an observation made upon it by one highly distinguished in the literature of our country and of the age, between whom and the author an unhappy coolness had for some years existed. As he finished the reading of the

Pathfinder, he exclaimed, "They may say what they will of Cooper; the man who wrote this book is not only a great man, but a good man."

The readers of the *Pathfinder* were quickly reconciled to the fourth appearance of Leatherstocking, when they saw him made to act a different part from any which the author had hitherto assigned him—when they saw him shown as a lover, and placed in the midst of associations which invested his character with a higher and more affecting heroism. In this work are two female characters, portrayed in a masterly manner, the corporal's daughter, Mabel Dunham, generous, resolute, yet womanly, and the young Indian woman, called by her tribe, the Dew of June, a personification of female truth, affection, and sympathy, with a strong aboriginal cast, yet a product of nature as bright and pure as that from which she is named.

Mercedes of Castile, published near the close of the same year, has none of the stronger characteristics of Cooper's genius, but in the *Deerslayer*, which appeared in 1841, another of his Leatherstocking tales, he gave us a work rivalling the Pathfinder. Leatherstocking is brought before us in his early youth, in the first exercise of that keen sagacity which is blended so harmoniously with a simple and ingenuous goodness. The two daughters of the retired freebooter dwelling on the Otsego lake, inspire scarcely less interest than the principal personage; Judith in the pride of her beauty and intellect, her good impulses contending with a fatal love of admiration, holding us fascinated with a constant interest in her fate, which, with consummate skill, we are permitted rather to conjecture than to know; and Hetty, scarcely less beautiful in

person, weak-minded, but wise in the midst of that weakness, beyond the wisdom of the loftiest intellect, through the power of conscience and religion. The character of Hetty would have been a hazardous experiment in feebler hands, but in his it was admirably successful.

The *Two Admirals* and *Wing-and-Wing* were given to the public in 1842, both of them taking a high rank among Cooper's sea-tales. The first of these is a sort of naval epic in prose; the flight and chase of armed vessels hold us in breathless suspense, and the sea-fights are described with a terrible power. In the later sea-tales of Cooper, it seems to me that the mastery with which he makes his grand processions of events pass before the mind's eye is even greater than in his earlier. The next year he published the *Wyandotte or Hutted Knoll*, one of his beautiful romances of the woods, and in 1844 two more of his sea-stories, *Afloat and Ashore* and *Miles Wallingford* its sequel. The long series of his nautical tales was closed by *Jack Tier, or the Florida Reef*, published in 1848, when Cooper was in his sixtieth year, and it is as full of spirit, energy, invention, life-like presentation of objects and events—

The vision and the faculty divine—

as any thing he had written.

Let me pause here to say that Cooper, though not a manufacturer of verse, was in the highest sense of the word a poet; his imagination wrought nobly and grandly, and imposed its creations on the mind of the reader for realities. With him there was no withering, or decline, or disuse of the poetic faculty; as he stepped downward from the zenith of life, no

shadow or chill came over it; it was like the year of some genial climates, a perpetual season of verdure, bloom, and fruitfulness. As these works came out, I was rejoiced to see that he was unspoiled by the controversies in which he had allowed himself to become engaged, that they had not given, to these better expressions of his genius, any tinge of misanthropy, or appearance of contracting and closing sympathies, any trace of an interest in his fellow-beings less large and free than in his earlier works.

Before the appearance of his *Jack Tier*, Cooper published, in 1845 and the following year, a series of novels relating to the Anti-rent question, in which he took great interest. He thought that the disposition, manifested in certain quarters, to make concessions to what he deemed a denial of the rights of property, was a first step in a most dangerous path. To discourage this disposition, he wrote *Satanstoe*, *The Chainbearer*, and *The Redskins*. They are didactic in their design, and want the freedom of invention which belongs to Cooper's best novels; but if they had been written by any body but Cooper, —by a member of Congress, for example, or an eminent politician of any class,—they would have made his reputation. It was said, I am told, by a distinguished jurist of our state, that they entitled the author to as high a place in law as his other works had won for him in literature.

I had thought, in meditating the plan of this discourse, to mention all the works of Mr. Cooper, but the length to which I have found it extending has induced me to pass over several written in the last ten years of his life, and to confine myself to those which best illustrate his literary character. The last of his novels was *The Ways of the Hour*, a work in which the

objections he entertained to the trial by jury in civil causes were stated in the form of a narrative.

It is a voluminous catalogue—that of Cooper's published works—but it comprises not all he wrote. He committed to the fire, without remorse, many of the fruits of his literary industry. It was understood, some years since, that he had a work ready for the press on the *Middle States of the Union*, principally illustrative of their social history; but it has not been found among his manuscripts, and the presumption is that he must have destroyed it. He had planned a work on the *Towns of Manhattan*, for the publication of which he made arrangements with Mr. Putnam of this city, and a part of which, already written, was in press at the time of his death. The printed part has since been destroyed by fire, but a portion of the manuscript was recovered. The work, I learn, will be completed by one of the family, who, within a few years past, has earned an honourable name among the authors of our country. Great as was the number of his works, and great as was the favour with which they were received, the pecuniary rewards of his success were far less than has been generally supposed—scarcely, as I am informed, a tenth part of what the common rumour made them. His fame was infinitely the largest acknowledgment which this most successful of American authors received for his labours.

The Ways of the Hour appeared in 1850. At this time his personal appearance was remarkable. He seemed in perfect health and in the highest energy and activity of his faculties. I have scarcely seen any man at that period of life on whom his years sat more lightly. His conversation had lost

none of its liveliness, though it seemed somewhat more gentle and forbearing in tone, and his spirits none of their elasticity. He was contemplating, I have since been told, another Leather-stocking tale, deeming that he had not yet exhausted the character, and those who consider what new resources it yielded him in the *Pathfinder* and the *Deerslayer*, will readily conclude that he was not mistaken.

The disease, however, by which he was removed, was even then impending over him, and not long afterwards his friends here were grieved to learn that his health was declining. He came to New York so changed that they looked at him with sorrow, and after a stay of some weeks, partly for the benefit of medical advice, returned to Cooperstown, to leave it no more. His complaint gradually gained strength, subdued a constitution originally robust, and finally passed into a confirmed dropsy. In August, 1851, he was visited by his excellent and learned friend, Dr. Francis, a member of the weekly club which he had founded in the early part of his literary career. He found him bearing the sufferings of his disease with manly firmness, gave him such medical counsels as the malady appeared to require, prepared him delicately for its fatal termination, and returned to New York with the most melancholy anticipations. In a few days afterwards, Cooper expired, amid the deep affliction of his family, on the 14th of September, the day before that on which he should have completed his sixty-second year. He died, apparently without pain, in peace and religious hope. The relations of man to his Maker, and to that state of being for which the present is but a preparation, had occupied much of his thoughts during his whole lifetime, and he crossed, with a serene com-

posure, the mysterious boundary which divides this life from the next.

The departure of such a man, in the full strength of his faculties,—on whom the country had for thirty years looked as one of the permanent ornaments of its literature, and whose name had been so often associated with praise, with renown, with controversy, with blame, but never with death,—diffused a universal awe. It was as if an earthquake had shaken the ground on which we stood, and showed the grave opening by our path. In the general grief for his loss, his virtues only were remembered, and his failings forgotten.

Of his failings I have said little; such as he had were obvious to all the world; they lay on the surface of his character; those who knew him least made the most account of them. With a character so made up of positive qualities—a character so independent and uncompromising, and with a sensitiveness far more acute than he was willing to acknowledge, it is not surprising that occasions frequently arose to bring him, sometimes into friendly collision, and sometimes into graver disagreements and misunderstandings with his fellowmen. For his infirmities, his friends found an ample counterpoise in the generous sincerity of his nature. He never thought of disguising his opinions, and he abhorred all disguise in others; he did not even deign to use that show of regard towards those of whom he did not think well, which the world tolerates, and almost demands. A manly expression of opinion, however different from his own, commanded his respect. Of his own works, he spoke with the same freedom as of the works of others; and never hesitated to express his judgment of a book for the reason that it was written by himself; yet

he could bear with gentleness any dissent from the estimate he placed on his own writings. His character was like the bark of the cinnamon, a rough and astringent rind without, and an intense sweetness within. Those who penetrated below the surface found a genial temper, warm affections, and a heart with ample place for his friends, their pursuits, their good name, their welfare. They found him a philanthropist, though not precisely after the fashion of the day; a religious man, most devout where devotion is most apt to be a feeling rather than a custom, in the household circle; hospitable, and to the extent of his means, liberal-handed in acts of charity. They found, also, that though in general he would as soon have thought of giving up an old friend as of giving up an opinion, he was not proof against testimony, and could part with a mistaken opinion as one parts with an old friend who has been proved faithless and unworthy. In short, Cooper was one of those who, to be loved, must be intimately known.

Of his literary character I have spoken largely in the narrative of his life, but there are yet one or two remarks which must be made to do it justice. In that way of writing in which he excelled, it seems to me that he united, in a pre-eminent degree, those qualities which enabled him to interest the largest number of readers. He wrote not for the fastidious, the over-refined, the morbidly delicate; for these find in his genius something too robust for their liking—something by which their sensibilities are too rudely shaken; but he wrote for mankind at large—for men and women in the ordinary healthful state of feeling—and in their admiration he found his reward. It is for this class that public libraries are obliged to provide themselves with an extraordinary number

of copies of his works: the number in the Mercantile Library, in this city, I am told, is forty. Hence it is, that he has earned a fame, wider, I think, than any author of modern times—wider, certainly, than any author, of any age, ever enjoyed in his lifetime. All his excellences are translatable—they pass readily into languages the least allied in their genius to that in which he wrote, and in them he touches the heart and kindles the imagination with the same power as in the original English.

Cooper was not wholly without humour; it is sometimes found lurking in the dialogue of Harvey Birch, and of Leatherstocking; but it forms no considerable element in his works; and if it did, it would have stood in the way of his universal popularity, since, of all qualities, it is the most difficult to transfuse into a foreign language. Nor did the effect he produced upon the reader depend on any grace of style which would escape a translator of ordinary skill. With his style, it is true, he took great pains, and in his earlier works, I am told, sometimes altered the proofs sent from the printer so largely that they might be said to be written over. Yet he attained no special felicity, variety, or compass of expression. His style, however, answered his purpose; it has defects, but it is manly and clear, and stamps on the mind of the reader the impression he desired to convey. I am not sure that some of the very defects of Cooper's novels do not add, by a certain force of contrast, to their power over the mind. He is long in getting at the interest of his narrative. The progress of the plot, at first, is like that of one of his own vessels of war, slowly, heavily, and even awkwardly working out of a harbour. We are impatient and weary, but when the ves-

sel is once in the open sea, and feels the free breath of heaven in her full sheets, our delight and admiration is all the greater at the grace, the majesty and power with which she divides and bears down the waves, and pursues her course, at will, over the great waste of waters.

Such are the works so widely read, and so universally admired, in all the zones of the globe, and by men of every kindred and every tongue; works which have made of those who dwell in remote latitudes, wanderers in our forests, and observers of our manners, and have inspired them with an interest in our history. A gentleman who had returned from Europe just before the death of Cooper, was asked what he found the people of the Continent doing. "They are all reading Cooper," he answered; "in the little kingdom of Holland, with its three millions of inhabitants, I looked into four different translations of Cooper in the language of the country." A traveller, who has seen much of the middle classes of Italy, lately said to me, "I found that all they knew of America, and that was not little, they had learned from Cooper's novels; from him they had learned the story of American liberty, and through him they had been introduced to our Washington; they had read his works till the shores of the Hudson and the valleys of Westchester, and the banks of Otsego lake had become to them familiar ground."

Over all the countries into whose speech this great man's works have been rendered by the labours of their scholars, the sorrow of that loss which we deplore is now diffusing itself. Here we lament the ornament of our country, there they mourn the death of him who delighted the human race. Even now, while I speak, the pulse of grief which is passing

through the nations has haply just reached some remote neighbourhood; the news of his death has been brought to some dwelling on the slopes of the Andes, or amidst the snowy wastes of the North, and the dark-eyed damsel of Chile, or the fair-haired maid of Norway, is sad to think that he whose stories of heroism and true love have so often kept her for hours from her pillow, lives no more.

He is gone! but the creations of his genius, fixed in living words, survive the frail material organs by which the words were first traced. They partake of a middle nature, between the deathless mind and the decaying body of which they are the common offspring, and are, therefore, destined to a duration, if not eternal, yet indefinite. The examples he has given in his glorious fictions, of heroism, honour and truth, of large sympathies between man and man, of all that is good, great, and excellent, embodied in personages marked with so strong an individuality that we place them among our friends and favourites; his frank and generous men, his gentle and noble women, shall live through centuries to come, and only perish with our language. I have said with our language; but who shall say when it may be the fate of the English language to be numbered with the extinct forms of human speech? Who shall declare which of the present tongues of the civilized world will survive its fellows? It may be that some one of them, more fortunate than the rest, will long outlast them, in some undisturbed quarter of the globe, and in the midst of a new civilization. The creations of Cooper's genius, even now transferred to that language, may remain to be the delight of the nations through another great cycle of centuries, beginning after the English language

and its contemporaneous form of civilization shall have passed away.

Mr. Bancroft rose, at the invitation of the President, to return thanks, on behalf of the Committee, to Mr. Bryant. He spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—The President has assigned to me the agreeable duty of rendering, on behalf of the Committee, their thanks to Mr. Bryant, who to-night has so beautifully proved how one man of genius may do honour to another. The delight with which you have listened is better applause than any words of mine, and I am sure I give expression to the feelings of your hearts, when I make, on behalf of my associates, these expressions of their gratitude. But we owe him more; he has made our effort successful. Your presence declares it is successful.

The men of letters of New York, overwhelmed with grief at the death of their illustrious brother, met together to agree on some tribute to the genius of James Fenimore Cooper, and, on the suggestion of Mr. Irving, proposed to raise a monumental statue to his memory.

We desire that this may be done here in New York, for Cooper was emphatically a son of New York, born in your vicinity, educated almost in your midst, receiving his inspirations among you, pursuing his career among you, trusting to you for that blame and that praise, without which there is no literary success. His career belongs emphatically and peculiarly to New York. New York, too, is his by conquest; for what is your domain? The ocean. No steamships plough the waves of the Atlantic so swiftly as those which go out of

your harbour; the ships which you send round the globe have now attained such mastery over the winds and the currents of the ocean, that their coming back into your harbour may be predicted almost to a day with as much certainty as the return of the seasons. Cooper, too, is at home upon the deep. No man like him has so commemorated the gallant deeds of our navy—no man like him has so described life on the ocean.

There is another reason why we call upon you for your sympathy and co-operation in our purpose. Do not think that we come to speak to you for the men of letters who come after him—no, we speak only for him, the first great American man of letters who has passed from amongst us. He was a forerunner,—one of the very few who, at long distances from one another, went before us. The universality of education among us, the wide diffusion of the opportunities of instruction, the quick kindling impulses of the young, their enterprise, love of admiration, love of truth, and of science—all will combine to make the class of those who are engaged in the pursuits of science and letters greater in America than they have ever been in any other country in the world, in proportion to its numbers. I give this, not as my own idea, but as a lesson which I learned of the illustrious Madison, who loved the pursuits of a scholar more than any other occupation of life, and himself achieved high distinction as a man of letters; as has been done by the statesman who to-night presides over this meeting, and who on several occasions has in his writings given expression to the thoughts and feelings of his country in such massive English as no one but himself could rival. The men of letters of the coming generations, and the men of let-

ters who now live, must consent to stand close together, like trees in the densest forest; but Cooper dwelt, as it were, alone on one of his own prairies. He was the first to people the realms of the interior of the country with the creatures of imagination. He was, as it were, the first to tell how the Hudson flows with inspiration to the poet; and henceforward the traveller who looks at the beauties of Glen Falls will see the people of the fictions of Cooper gather around him among the spray and the rocks; or if, on the banks of Lake George, he looks out on the gorgeous scenes which the decline of the sun presents to him, he will find the richest hues of evening made yet more beautiful by the presence of the creations with which the fancy of Cooper has environed them. While we, then, stand crowded together, we direct your attention to Cooper, rising like the stately and solitary oak on the plain, without a rival or a neighbour.

There is another reason, the Committee instruct me to state, why we call on you to erect a statue to Cooper: it is from respect for the genuine sincerity and integrity of his character; it is that he sincerely loved truth and honestly pursued its dictates; that he never truckled to any temporary passion or social influence, but pursued his own career, as if he feared not to guide his bark over the stormy waves of competition, straight onward towards his end. It is from the profound and deep conviction of the vigorous character of his intellect, the purity of his life and heart, and the manly genuineness of his piety, that we invite you to join in building a monument which shall hold him up as an example to the young.

We ask you, for a moment, to forget the care, the ambition, the brilliant successes, and overflowing prosperity of the

day, and to live with us in the past. This beautiful and hospitable city should be the chosen home of men of letters. Here by the ocean side—here where there is easy connection with all the world—this commercial metropolis should be, as it were, the eye to our country, as Athens was to Greece, and should rival that city in respect for the arts, for science, for truth, and for whatever contributes to ennoble and dignify humanity. And therefore it is that we have asked you for a few moments to forget the shadows of the present, and to gaze with us on the realities of eternity—to pass from the contests of to-day, and to join in doing honour to him whose great career is already brought to a close.

Ladies and gentlemen, In your presence, in your sympathies, we read your approbation of our design, and in that approbation we find a sure omen of success.

Mr. Bancroft's speech was received with enthusiastic cheers, and on its conclusion Mr. Webster rose and shook hands with him, amid renewed applause. The Rev. Samuel Osgood being then called upon, came forward and said:

I am very sorry, Mr. President, to say in this assembly what in sincerity I am obliged to say. This is not the place for me, and when asked but a few minutes since to address the audience, I positively declined, and your call takes me wholly by surprise. We have met together this evening to commemorate the services of a great mind in our republic of letters, and to men of historical position, his own peers in honour, these tributes to his memory had, I supposed, been entrusted. Among such personages I have no claim to stand, and my word, rather of apology than of speech, is presumptuous,

unless I take my place as one of the audience and speak as if for them.

One thought here forces itself upon the hearer which needs no studied words to give it expression. After what we have seen and heard to-night, how can we but speak our gratitude to the leaders of our national literature brought so near to us now by the faces of the living, and the memory of the dead? Honour—all honours to our chiefs in romance, poetry, history, oratory, especially to such as have adorned the stern utilities of our country by the charms of pure taste and high imagination. We are and have been from the first a practical people—too much taken up with the difficulties of our material position to find much time or thought for the beautiful arts. Most of us personally have been obliged to struggle for the means of livelihood and the opportunities of education. Sons of farmers and mechanics, and of men of like hardy lot, we have not been trained in exquisite tastes, or breathed an atmosphere of Attic refinement. But, sir, we hear, and always have heard, the voice divine that calls us to follow a noble aim in all our strivings, and see a lofty ideal in the midst of our sternest labours. We as a people have not been wanting in imagination, few as our achievements may have been in the arts usually called imaginative. Our destined material thus far has not been the marble or the canvass, nor have we put all our aspiration into poetry and romance. But the ideal is in us, and it must come out. It is working itself out in the whole energy of a people now starting into a great and progressive nation, and making to themselves history and romance out of their very growth. Honour to the illustrious man whose name crowns this festival—honour to him as an

educator of the popular fancy, giving such beauty to true heroism, and adorning the sturdy virtues of our fathers with the finest graces of the affections. Honour to him for what he has expressed, and for what he implied. His stories of adventure, his portraitures of rude energy struggling upwards into refinement and aspiration, are good emblems of the better spirit of our people—cheering promises of the time when our plain utilities shall open into beauty, even as our rough soil blooms into loveliness and fragrance. But a beginning has been made, and it is noble enough to promise an august career in all the arts that refine and elevate a nation. We have been working out our mind in the hard school of necessity. We have blocked out the statue thus far but in the rough, and what it shall be, we hardly dare to tell. Yet form and features have begun to show themselves; ere long the polish will come, and the Eternal Spirit of Beauty will not refuse its fire, nor fail to inform it with a celestial soul.

I am surprised to find myself speaking here to-night. More words I could add, were it not that the office belongs more fitly far to others of historic name; and I must close with a single thought:—It is good to be here at our great author's obsequies. It is good to meet on the high and common ground of allegiance to what is best in letters, far away from party strifes and vulgar cares. Let us carry a worthy lesson with us from this place. We celebrate now the services of a man pure in life as powerful in word. As we, his friends, meet together, we are as those who bore their torches at a hero's obsequies reversed, to intimate how great a light has been extinguished. We will be content to bear them so until this hour closes, but then lift them bravely

aloft; let solemn memories rise into cheerful hopes; let drooping regrets start up into exalted purposes. Fidelity is the best tribute to the faithful. A life pure, generous, Christian, true to God and man, is the noblest history, the most winning romance, the divinest poem.

The President then called on the Rev. Dr. Bethune, who come forward amid the most cordial demonstrations of satisfaction by the assembly, and said:

Apologies at such a time are, I am aware, Mr. President, seldom in good taste; yet, lest the rough form of my few remarks should appear disrespectful to the audience, I must say that I did not suppose you would call on me this evening. Many weeks since, when this meeting was first proposed, the Committee of Arrangements did me the honour of asking that I should say a few words, which my sincere admiration for the character and services of the great man who has gone from among us, would not allow me to refuse; but, learning that so many far better qualified were to be here to-night, I scarcely expected to be thought of. Still, sir, it is the duty of every man promptly to obey constituted authority, and I may not hesitate.

The eloquent gentleman, who has just addressed you, said that we had met to "celebrate the obsequies" of him who has been in all our thoughts. Pardon me for dissenting from the expression. We have met to congratulate his spirit on its immortality. We are not permitted to look within the mysterious veil which divides time from eternity, or follow him before the presence of God; but we know that he died in firm faith upon the Son of God, our Redeemer, the only "way and

truth and life" by whom we can "come unto the Father." In those almighty, just, and merciful hands we can leave him; but, while we mourn the departure of his generous works on earth, it is our comfort and joy to know that his mind lives for us and for all posterity in his imperishable pages. If we may not hear fresh oracles of wisdom and truth from his once indefatigable pen, those which he has uttered remain with us ever precious and affectionately cherished. It is now our desire to erect a memorial of our gratitude for so rich a legacy. The fame of Cooper needs no artificial monument; with his own hand has he engraved it on the magic scenery of our country, and interwoven it with the legends of our history:

"Call it not vain; they do not err,
Who say, that, when a poet dies,
Mute nature mourns her worshipper
And celebrates his obsequies;
Who say, tall cliff and cavern lone
For the departed bard make moan;
That mountains weep in crystal rill;
And flowers in tears of balm distill;
Through his loved groves the breezes sigh,
And oaks in deeper groans reply;
And rivers teach their rushing wave
To murmur dirges round his grave.

"Not that, in sooth, o'er mortal urn
Such things inanimate can mourn;
But that the stream, the wood, the gale
Is vocal with the plaintive wail
Of those, who, else forgotten long,
Live in the poet's faithful song,
And, in the poet's parting breath,
Whose memory feels a second death."

Our Cooper was not a poet in the melody of rhythm or the responses of rhyme, but eminently one in the faculty of

throwing the charms of imagination around rugged realities, and of elevating the soul with noble sentiments. Who with any sense of poetry could read the "Prairie" and not feel that he was entranced by a poet's spell! He was a true poet, and, if we had the spiritual perception of him whose lines I have just repeated, we should be conscious of a mournful moan from out the rocky cliffs of the Hudson, answered by the sighing of its sad waves along the shores illustrated by his genius. There is scarcely a portion of our land, or scene of our best history, or field of the ocean cut by an American keel, which does not bear testimony to his graphic truth. But, sir, how dare I attempt his eulogy, after his memory has been crowned this night by the classic hand of him, whom all of us acknowledge the foremost representative of American poetry, before an assembly of our citizens unparalleled for its combination of numbers, intelligence, and moral worth, presided over—pardon me, sir, I would fain avoid the excess of unnecessary compliment, but when I use the briefest term must pay the greatest—presided over by yourself!

My friend Mr. Bancroft has said, (I cannot repeat his happy language, but will reach his thought,) that we are not here to honour "other men of letters," the worthy compeers of their deceased brother; but I come out from this assembled senate of authors (among whom I have lawfully no place) to speak as one of the people, and say that we are assembled for their honour as well as his. We are met to assure those eminent men, who give us the wise lessons of our history, ennoble our thoughts by the highest flights of song, and charm us with ethics in the pure strength of our Saxon tongue made graceful and tender through the inspiration of an exquisite sensibility,

that we are not ungrateful for the high benefits which the Father of lights confers upon us in their devoted services. This is the occasion for a precedent of admiring justice to our men of commanding and generous intellect. It is a sad thought, which can be relieved only by the faith that the records of genius are imperishable—but the present reality forces it upon us—the men whom we are this night happy to look upon, whose voice and pen are even now contributing their efforts for our delight and profit, must soon pass away. We must have the satisfaction of assuring them by the honour we pay to the memory of their first-born, first-departed brother, that, when they are gone, they shall not be forgotten. No, gentlemen; (bowing to Messrs. Bryant, Bancroft, and Irving;) go on in the noble career for which Providence has fitted you,—add hourly to the inestimable treasures already bestowed by your hands upon your countrymen and the world; and if you need a motive beyond your own self-gratifying love of doing good, be assured that when you (*vos quoque morituri*) have left us, we, who now cover with tributary laurels the brow of Cooper, will follow your ashes with fond and loyal recollections.

Yet our thanks should not be expended in "winged words," but for the sake of posterity and the mass of our compatriot people, embodied in some enduring, public shape. Arts are kindred; and among the best uses to which those which imitate the visible works of the Creator can be devoted, is the preservation of their form and features who have been benefactors of their country and mankind. Therefore would we, and our purpose shall not fail, erect such a monument to the honour of this great and good man, the

first, I trust, of a long series, which shall commemorate his contemporaries and successors in like dignity. We could not fail to note, as the orator of the evening, in simple and elegant panegyric, traced the long catalogue of our Cooper's writings, that those which most concerned the history and scenes of his native land and ours, were most appreciated and efficient. The classical nations of antiquity deemed the fame of a hero or a sage not complete until they had inaugurated his statue. The capitals of modern Europe are crowded with such enduring presentments of those whom kings delight to honour as instruments of despotism, or for whom the people are permitted to testify esteem as friends of humanity. There is scarcely a town, however small, without one or more statues of the dead in its open squares. But, many as are the illustrious of our annals, you may look throughout our whole land, and (with some insignificant exceptions) discover no proofs that we can appreciate public services. Let us, then, invoke the Genius of Sculpture, whose presence among us is so amply certified, to pourtray for the eyes of our people and their children the lineaments of that form and face which, when living, were animated by the patriotic and zealous spirit of Cooper. Let it be placed, not in a hall of learning, or in a retreat of the few, but in the free common air and sunlight, where all may look upon it, and learn fresh gratitude, and gain fresh incentives to pursuits so honourable and so honoured. We have been told that his voice is now heard in every civilized tongue, and we know, wherever it speaks, it tells the story of our national dignity, and teaches the maxims of political wisdom and honesty which have raised us to our unexampled prosperity. Such are the best contributions we

can make to the freedom of oppressed countries; because they show that, without a popular love of justice and union, arms and blood are powerless to achieve liberty. The world has admired our Cooper as a man of genius; let them see that his countrymen love him as a wise champion of political truth, and a faithful citizen. Without love, which our God has ordained to be the sole sufficient spring of all duty, virtue is but a name; and without patriotism, (the scoff of knaves, but the admiration of the good,) our citizenship will be hypocrisy. Let us cherish this grand virtue; let us teach it to posterity; and, by public respect to the memory of those, who, like Cooper, have served earnestly under the institutions which educated them, conserve our self-respect, and show our thankfulness for our wide, rich land, our unequalled constitution, and the union of these States, the bond of their security.

Mr. WEBSTER next introduced Mr. G. P. R. JAMES, who was received with loud and continued cheers. He spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen:—It is only this very moment that I have had the first intimation that I would be called upon to address you. But it is not for me, an Englishman—and being proud of being an Englishman—it is not for me, a romance writer—and proud to be a romance writer—it is not for me, a man of the people—and proud to be a man of the people—to refuse my humble tribute to an American romance writer, and a man of the people. But all that I could have said has been taken from me by the speakers who preceded me. What can I add after the speeches of such men as the President of this assembly, of my

honourable friend Mr. Bancroft, and of the reverend gentlemen who have addressed you, and after the oration of Mr. Bryant himself? What can I say after the language of him whose massy eloquence, like the writings of him whose memory we have met to commemorate, have gone all over the civilized world? Little has been left to me but to correct a mistake relative to a person of the same name as my own. In alluding to Mr. James, as an opponent of Mr. Cooper, Mr. Bryant called him a veterinary surgeon. That gentleman was no connection of mine, and I never saw him; but I know he was not a veterinary, but a naval surgeon, and the two professions cannot be combined, unless by that peculiar animal called a "horse marine." Another motive I had in responding to your call, was to add my tribute to an American author, and upon this point little is left me to say. I am only like a judge at the end of a trial, when addressing the jury after the witnesses have been all examined; though I do not pretend to be much of a judge in literature. I will, however, sum up as best I can; and I ask, to what is it that you are about to erect a statue? Is it simply to a novelist? No, no, no—far more than that. It is to genius, whose triumphs are as far superior to those of the military man, as mind is superior to matter—as the power that can sway millions is to that which can slay hundreds of thousands. But is this all? No! far from it. It is a statue to truth—straightforward truth—truth, worthy of more statues than were ever raised to it. Is it to truth alone? No; but to truth, genius, and patriotism combined. I say he was a patriot in the fullest sense of the word, for, though he spent a considerable part of his life out of this great

land, he was every where an American—true to his country, and true to himself. With this summing up, I would ask if there is any man or any woman (and woman's voice is more powerful to plead than man's)—I would ask, is there any one who leaves this hall to-night who will not contribute, nay, who will not use every exertion to procure contributions from their friends and neighbours, to erect a statue that will go down to posterity as a testimony of your reverence for genius, truth, and patriotism?

On the conclusion of Mr. JAMES'S speech, Mr. WEBSTER said, I perceive among the gentlemen around me, the familiar face of an old friend, who was personally well acquainted with Mr. Cooper, and was, I believe, his physician: will Dr. Francis offer any remarks on the subject of this evening's consideration?

Dr. FRANCIS said, I did not expect, Mr. President, to be called upon this evening to say any thing in behalf of the measures which the Committee contemplate in honour of the memory of Mr. Cooper. But I am fortified in the attempt to say a word or two on the subject, in being requested by high authority, and a knowledge that the call is *constitutional*. Ladies and gentlemen, the learned President has correctly informed you that I was an early friend of Fenimore Cooper. It is more than thirty years since I first became acquainted with him. I have seen him in the private room, in the public hall, and at the meetings of the many; I have seen him in the highest flights of his genius, at the table where numerous friends were convened together; I have heard him converse on national affairs, and descant upon the literature of his

country; have listened to his disquisitions on that monster of the ocean, the Kraken, and dwell, with the enthusiasm of old Walton, on trout-fishing, and the Otsego bass. I, therefore, believe I have been tolerably well acquainted with Mr. Cooper, and I do not think that the gentlemen who have honoured us with their observations this evening, have in the least degree erred in what they have said concerning his talents, his patriotism, his disinterestedness, his love of truth, or any of the great qualities that made up his character; and I will add, that in the course of a long life, I have never known any gentleman more intrepid, more self-possessed, or more honourable in all his dealings. The Committee of his friends will, I hope, be able to erect a suitable monument to him.

Besides his great abilities, he was also a friend to true Christianity. One of his leading maxims in life was, that fiscal integrity was a brilliant jewel in the coronet of the Christian professor. He was well aware, during his sickness, of his approaching end; but then he had the consolation of knowing that he had never, through life, written one line which he would wish to blot. I believe that principles of a more elevated and genuine morality cannot be found in all the pages of literature, than in those of James Fenimore Cooper. There was no compromise, no half-and-half way with him; all was truthful and sternly honest. It was his love of honesty that caused me to admire him. To the Christian world I may say, he was much engaged in studies of a religious nature; he was not merely a novelist, a writer of naval history, and of biography, but he was also a theologian, and wrote on theological subjects with extraordinary talent and erudition. He was imbued with polemical controversy;

he had read the old divines, and was acquainted with the history of religious creeds; he knew the bearings of political and religious institutions; he was connected with the Protestant Episcopal Church, and he died in the full belief of a future state and of the Christian dispensation. I mention these things, that there may not be a doubt on the minds of the people in relation to the character of our late friend. I am gratified with all I have heard to-night; this is the highest compliment he could receive, and half-a-dozen times it has crossed my mind, Would it be possible to find such an enlightened body, so large a mass of intelligence and respectability, to give honour to any but a most truly great man?

During my sojourn abroad, I met, by accident, a young Englishman, who, having learned that I was an American, informed me that he had travelled quite extensively through the States. "A great country, indeed, sir," added he, "but what has most struck me is, that I have not found in all your land a single conspicuous memorial of the dead; you have no galleries of paintings, no columns, no statues; you have no Westminster Abbey for the repose of illustrious characters. I suppose, however, that with your rapid progress this defect will in time be remedied, at least when you can boast of having produced great men." As he uttered half truth, I made no reply; my feelings were mortified. Our friend on my right, the distinguished novelist, Mr. James, too, lately told us in a public address, that he had in vain during his extensive travels through our country, cast his eyes about for any tablet or statue commemorative of our Franklin, the American Solon. The painful truth perpetually strikes us, that we have been negligent in the extreme of a proper reverence for

the memories of the noble sons of our soil; and I may add, in confirmation of this debasing fact, that perhaps of the whole audience now assembled in this hall, so interested this night in our proceedings, so cultivated and so refined in their characters, scarcely half-a-dozen can be found who are able to tell us where repose the mortal remains of our illustrious Fulton! With what eloquence, in behalf of the present undertaking of the Committee, do these circumstances plead! and how earnestly should we labour to remove such a reproach from our history!

I think I see in your countenances a desire to co-operate in this honourable work: the majority of you are of ripe years, and you and your children are familiar with the writings of Cooper; have been edified by his ethics, led captive by his imagination, and instructed by his truthful and admirably constructed narratives; and what adds to the charm of his literary productions is, that you obtain from their perusal so just an impression of the moral attributes, the rectitude, and the philosophy of the author himself. You are not called upon to erect an altar to an "unknown god;" you are asked to present an enduring recognition of the vast excellencies of a native citizen, who, in the fullest acceptation of language, was a benefactor to his country. To be laggard in such an enterprise, in this age of moral and intellectual progress, when man, by every laudable means, is daily asserting the dignity of his nature, when the written page exhibits a virtue unknown in former times, when we talk by lightning, print by the steam-engine, and paint by the sunbeam, were indeed a neglect to admit of no extenuation. You are, therefore, with a perfect knowledge of the Committee's views, enabled to ap-

preciate the services you render to the patriotic design of erecting, in some public square in this metropolis, a becoming monument to his memory. Let this be done with all convenient speed; let the sculptor now do what many pens have already done—add, from his art, the expression of heart-felt gratitude for the true life and pure fame of the illustrious and noble deceased; so that posterity may behold the efficacy of your faith, in the demonstration that shall promptly be made, in response to your liberality.

I rejoice at the aspect the affair has taken, in its origin among *us*. I want New York to be first in every thing. I want this glorious city to exalt herself in arts and in literature, as she has in commerce, in patriotism, in devotion to the Union of the States. I love the East, because it produced Mr. Webster; I love the West, because it produced Henry Clay; and I might go on in this manner, and refer to various parts of our country for which I have also a wonderful liking; but above all I love my native New York. Her history is replete with deeds of daring. So early as 1765, during her colonial vassalage, liberty and the rights of man commanded her energies in council; and she delights to be in advance in generous measures, whenever the occasion demands it. 'Tis but as yesterday that one of her enlightened citizens, by his own private munificence, carried out the Arctic Polar Expedition, in search of the long-lost Capt. Sir John Franklin; and I am told to-day, that the great project, by the same distinguished individual, is to be forthwith renewed. Fenimore Cooper is among her famous sons, to the manor born; and here you have an opportunity to take the first step for the

erection of a monument to the great New York author. As he is among the first of our literary men who have passed away, so also will this be the first measure to stamp our esteem of the merits of the literary character. God bless the undertaking; may you go on to aid it further, nor desist till the goodly work is accomplished.

Mr. Webster closed the meeting with a short address. He remarked:

It has been said with great truth by a profound philosopher. "Call no man happy till his death;" and the reason I suppose is to be found in the vicissitudes of life, the changes of human feelings, and objects of human pursuit; so that before the end of life arrives the character itself becomes changed—"*finis coronat opus.*"—He, in honour of whose memory we are assembled, has accomplished his career of human existence; "after life's fitful fever he sleeps well." His character is accomplished and remains itself a monument. The perturbations of life cannot affect him, and the question is, what of value has he left to his country?

You all remember the eloquent and ingenious funeral oration of Mark Antony over the body of Julius Cæsar. Antony presented what he called the will of Cæsar, by which, as Antony proclaimed, he made the Roman people his heirs. Giving to every man so many drachms, and to the whole

> . . . . . "his walks,
> His private arbours, and new-planted orchards,
> On this side Tyber; he hath left them you,
> And to your heirs for ever; common pleasures
> To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves."

It would have been better if Cæsar could have made a legacy to the Roman people of the example of a pure and spotless character. But the possessions which he left them were the result of war, conscription, and rapine; they were wrung from oppressed provinces. They were valuable, it is true, in themselves, but their origin was lawless, and their uses temporary and perishable. Could Cæsar have bestowed on the Roman people ten times the wealth he possessed, what would it have been compared with the imperishable legacy left by men of letters to the country, or the works of art, sculpture, painting, and architecture which transmit, in a sort of visible shape, the mind of one age to that of the ages that come after it? The productions of mind are imperishable while men remain civilized; and therefore it is that the reasoning of the understanding, the outpourings of the heart, and the creations of the intellect, exceed in value all the bequests which it is in the power of all the kings of the earth to make.

It is due to the memory of Fenimore Cooper, it is due to ourselves, it is due to the country, that we raise a monument of our gratitude to one who has left us an intellectual inheritance.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now take leave of you and of an occasion which has devolved upon me the performance of a most agreeable duty.

The following reminiscences of Mr. Cooper were addressed to the Secretary of the Committee, by Dr. John W. Francis, LL. D.

New York, *October* 1*st*, 1851.

My Dear Sir :—I readily furnish you with such reminiscences of the late Mr. Cooper as occur to me, although the pressure of professional engagements absolutely forbids such details as I would gladly record. For nearly thirty years I have been the occasional medical adviser, and always the ardent personal friend of the illustrious deceased; but our intercourse has been so fragmentary, owing to the distance we have lived apart, and the busy lives we have both led, that the impressions which now throng upon and impress me are desultory and varied, though endearing. I first knew Mr. Cooper in 1823. He at that time was recognized as the author of "Precaution," of "The Spy," and of "The Pioneers." The two last-named works had attracted especial notice by their widely-extended circulation, and the novelty of their character in American literature. He was often to be seen at that period in conversation at the City Hotel in Broadway, near Old Trinity, where many of our most renowned naval and military men convened. He was the original projector of a literary and social association called the "Bread and Cheese Club," whose place of rendezvous was at Washington Hall. They met weekly in the evening, and furnished the occasion of much intellectual gratification and genial pleasure. That most adhesive friend, the poet Halleck, Chancellor Kent, G. C. Verplanck, Wiley, the publisher of Mr. Cooper's works, De Kay, the naturalist, C. A. Davis, (Jack Downing,) Charles King, now President of Columbia College, J. De Peyster Ogden, J. W. Jarvis, the painter, John and William Duer, and many others were of the confederacy. Washington Irving, at the period of the formation of this circle of friends, was in England, occupied with his inimitable "Sketch Book." I had the honour of an early admittance to the Club. In balloting for membership the bread declared an affirmative; and two ballots of cheese against an individual proclaimed non-admittance.

From the meetings of this society Mr. Cooper was rarely absent. When presiding officer of the evening, he attracted especial consideration from the richness of his anecdotes, his wide American knowledge, and his courteous behaviour. These meetings were often signally char-

acterized by the number of invited guests of high reputation who gathered thither for recreative purposes, both of mind and body; jurists of acknowledged eminence, governors of different states, senators, members of the House of Representatives, literary men of foreign distinction, and authors of repute in our own land. It was gratifying to observe the dexterity with which Mr. Cooper would cope with some Eastern friend who contributed to our delight with a "Boston notion," or with Trelawny, the associate of Byron, descanting on Greece and the "Younger Son," or with any guests of the club, however dissimilar their habits or character; accommodating his conversation and manners with the most marvellous facility. The New York attachments of Mr. Cooper were ever dominant. I witnessed a demonstration of the early enthusiasm and patriotic activity of our late friend in his efforts, with many of our leading citizens, in getting up the Grand Castle Garden Ball, given in honour of Lafayette. The arrival of the "nation's guest" at New York, in 1824, was the occasion of the most joyful demonstrations, and the celebration was a splendid spectacle; it brought together celebrities from many remote parts of the Union. Mr. Cooper must have undergone extraordinary fatigue during the day and following night; but nearly as he was exhausted, he exhibited, when the public festivals were brought to a close, that astonishing readiness and skill in literary execution for which he was always so remarkable. Adjourning near daybreak to the office of his friend Mr. Charles King, he wrote out more quickly than any other hand could copy, the very long and masterly report which next day appeared in Mr. King's paper—a report which conveyed to tens of thousands who had not been present, no inconsiderable portion of the enjoyment they had felt who were the immediate participants in this famous festival. The manly bearing, keen intelligence, and thoroughly honourable instincts of Mr. Cooper, united as they were with this gift of writing,—soon most effectively exhibited in his literary labours, now constantly increasing,—excited my highest expectations of his career as an author, and my sincere esteem for the man. There was a fresh promise, a vigorous impulse, and especially an American enthusiasm about him, that seemed to indicate not only individual fame, but national honour. Since that period I have followed his brilliant course with no less of admiration than delight.

It was to me a cause of deep regret that soon after his return from Europe, crowned with a distinct and noble reputation, he became involved in a series of law-suits, growing out of libels, and originating, partly in his own imprudence, and partly in the reckless severity of the press. But these are but temporary considerations in the retrospect of

his achievements; and, if I mistake not, in these difficulties he in every instance succeeded in gaining the verdict of the jury. It was a task insurmountable to overcome a *fact* as stated by Mr. Cooper. Associated as he was in my own mind with the earliest triumphs of American letters, I think of him as the creator of the genuine nautical and forest romances of "Long Tom Coffin" and "Leatherstocking;" as the illustrator of our country's scenes and characters to the Europeans; and not as the critic of our republican inconsistencies, or as a litigant with caustic editors.

It is well known that for a long period Mr. Cooper, at occasional times only, visited New York city. His residence for many years was an elegant and quiet mansion on the southern borders of Otsego Lake. Here—in his beautiful retreat, embellished by the substantial fruits of his labours, and displaying every where his exquisite taste, his mind, ever intent on congenial tasks, which, alas! are left unfinished, surrounded by a devoted and highly cultivated family, and maintaining the same clearness of perception, serene firmness, and integrity of tone, which distinguished him in the meridian of his life—were his mental employments prosecuted. He lived chiefly in rural seclusion, and with habits of methodical industry. When visiting the city he mingled cordially with his old friends; and it was on the last occasion of this kind, at the beginning of April, that he consulted me with some earnestness in regard to his health. He complained of the impaired tone of the digestive organs, great torpor of the liver, weakness of muscular activity, and feebleness in walking. Such suggestions were offered for his relief as the indications of disease warranted. He left the city for his country residence, and I was gratified shortly after to learn from him of his better condition.

During July and August I maintained a correspondence with him on the subject of his increasing physical infirmities, and frankly expressed to him the necessity of such remedial measures as seemed clearly necessary. Though occasionally relieved of my anxieties by the kind communications of his excellent friend and attending physician, Dr. Johnson, I was not without solicitude, both from his own statements as well as those of Dr. Johnson himself, that his disorder was on the increase; certain symptoms were indeed mitigated, but the radical features of his illness had not been removed. A letter which I soon received induced me forthwith to repair to Cooperstown, and on the 27th of August I saw Mr. Cooper at his own dwelling. My reception was cordial. With his family about him, he related with great clearness the particulars of his sufferings, and the means of relief to which he was subjected. Dr.

Johnson was in consultation. I at once was struck with the heroic firmness of the sufferer, under an accumulation of depressing symptoms. His physical aspect was much altered from that noble freshness he was wont to bear; his complexion was pallid; his inferior extremities greatly enlarged by serous effusion; his debility so extreme as to require an assistant for change of position in bed; his pulse sixty-four. There could be no doubt that the long-continued hepatic obstruction had led to confirmed dropsy, which, indeed, betrayed itself in several other parts of the body. Yet was he patient and collected. That powerful intellect still held empire with commanding force, clearness, and vigour. I explained to him the nature of his malady; its natural termination when uncontrolled; dwelt upon the favourable condition and yet regular action of the heart, and other vital functions, and the urgent necessity of endeavouring still more to fulfil certain indications, in order to overcome the force of particular tendencies in the disorder. I frankly assured him that within the limits of a week a change in the complaint was indispensable to lessen our forebodings of its ungovernable nature.

He listened with fixed attention; and now and then threw out suggestions of cure such as are not unfrequent with cultivated minds.

The great characteristics of his intellect were now even more conspicuous than before. Not a murmur escaped his lips; conviction of his extreme illness wrought no alteration of his features; he gave no expression of despondency; his tone and his manner were equally dignified, cordial, and natural. It was his happiness to be blessed with a family around him whose greatest gratification was to supply his every want, and a daughter for a companion in his pursuits, who was his intelligent amanuensis and correspondent, as well as indefatigable nurse.*

I forbear enlarging on matters too professional for present detail. During the night after my arrival he sustained an attack of severe fainting, which convinced me still further of his great personal weakness. An ennobling philosophy, however, gave him support, and in the morning he had again been refreshed by a sleep of some few hours' duration. I renewed to him and to his family the hopes and the discouragements in his case. Never was information of so grave a cast received by any individual in a calmer spirit. He said little as to his prospects of recovery. Upon my taking leave of him, however, shortly after, in the morning, I am convinced, from his manner, that he shared my apprehen-

* The accomplished authoress of "Rural Hours."

sion of a fatal termination of his disorder. Nature, however strong in her gifted child, had now her healthful rights largely invaded. His constitutional buoyancy and determination, by leading him to slight that distant and thorough attention demanded by primary symptoms, doubtless contributed to their subsequent aggravation.

I shall say but a few words more on this agonizing topic. The letters which I received, after my return home, communicated at times some cheering facts of renovation; but, on the whole, discouraging demonstrations of augmenting illness and lessened hope, were their prominent characteristics. A letter to me from his son-in-law, of the 14th of September, announced: "Mr. Cooper died, apparently without much pain, to-day at half-past one, P. M., leaving his family, although prepared by his gradual failure, in deep affliction. He would have been sixty-two years old to-morrow."

A life of such uniform and unparalleled excellence and service, a career so brilliant and honourable, closed in a befitting manner, and was crowned by a death of quiet resignation. Conscious of his approaching dissolution, his intelligence seemed to glow with increased fullness as his prostrated frame yielded by degrees to the last summons. It is familiarly known to his most intimate friends, that for some considerable period prior to his fatal illness, he appropriated liberal portions of his time to the investigation of scriptural truths, and that his convictions were ripe in Christian doctrines. With assurances of happiness in the future, he graciously yielded up his spirit to the disposal of its Creator. His death, which must thus have been the beginning of a serene and more blessed life to him, is universally regarded as a national loss.

Will you allow me to add a few words to this letter, already perhaps of undue extent. It has been my gratification, during a life of some duration, to have become personally acquainted with many eminent characters in the different walks of professional and literary avocation. I never knew an individual more thoroughly imbued with higher principles of action than Mr. Cooper: he acted upon principles, and fully comprehended the principles upon which he acted. Casual observers could scarcely, at times, understand and appreciate his motives or conduct. An independence of character, worthy of the highest respect, and a natural boldness of temper, which led him to a frank, emphatic, and intrepid utterance of his thoughts and sentiments, were uncongenial to that large class of people, who, from the want of moral courage, or a feeble physical temperament, habitually conform to public opinion, and endeavour to conciliate the world. Mr. Cooper was one of the

most genuine Americans in his tone of mind, in manly self-reliance, in sympathy with the scenery, the history, and the constitution of his country, which it has ever been my lot to know. His profession and his practice went hand in hand. He was American, inside and out: whether he discoursed with the élite at Holland House, London, or held converse with the hard-fisted democracy in the Park, New York, there was nothing tortuous in him. His genius was American, fresh, vigorous, independent, and devoted to native subjects. The opposition he met with on his return from Europe, in consequence of his patriotic, though, perhaps, injudicious attempts to point out the faults and duties of his countrymen, threw him reluctantly on the defensive, and sometimes gave an antagonistic manner to his intercourse; but whoever, recognizing his intellectual superiority, and respecting his integrity of purpose, met him candidly, in an open, cordial, and generous spirit, soon found in Mr. Cooper an honest man and a thorough patriot.

It would constitute an article of interest to the lovers of dramatic literature and scenic illustration, to notice at some length the pleasure which Mr. Cooper experienced in these subjects, both as sources of intellectual gratification and mental improvement. His taste was fully awakened to the richest indulgence of the drama soon after the arrival of Edmund Kean, the great tragedian; and his subsequent acquaintance with Charles Matthews, the unparalleled comedian, only served to increase his estimation of the capabilities and influence of histrionic talents, when displayed by the master-workings of such consummate actors. Concurring circumstances may also have contributed to the genial associations which he cherished for the drama at this particular period of his life. He had been a student of men and books; it was now that he assumed the responsibilities of an author. His "Spy," published in 1821, promised him a wide reputation: Kean had reached our shores the year before, and Matthews was in our midst in 1822. A friend of Mr. Cooper, Charles P. Clinch, had just dramatized with great success the Spy, for the Park Theatre; and "the run" it enjoyed for many, many nights, could not fail to add to the immense popularity Mr. Cooper was now daily receiving by his new vocation as author.

Mr. Cooper now became indoctrinated into the mysteries of the green-room, and not unfrequently gave relief to the more sober contemplations of the closet by casting a glance at the machinery of the mimic world and its prominent operators. During a memorable excursion which I made to Albany with Dunlap, Matthews, and Mr. Cooper, in the spring of 1823, I found him abounding in dramatic anecdote as well as in the more elevated associations which the striking scenery of the Hudson

brought to mind. Col. Williams's theory of the formation of that noble river from the inland lakes, the Palisades, Fort Putnam, Andre and Arnold, were also among the topics of discourse. The novel of the Spy was, however, the leading subject of Matthews's conversation, and I have not yet forgotten that on that occasion Cooper unfolded, to Matthews in particular, his intention of writing a series of works illustrative of the physical aspect of his native country, of revolutionary occurrences, and of the red man of the western world. Matthews expressed in strong terms the patriotic benefits of such an undertaking, and complimented Mr. Cooper on the specimen which he had already furnished in the delineation of Harvey Birch. The approbation of Matthews could never, by any one who knew him well, be slightly appreciated. There was little of the flatterer in him at any time; he was a sort of "My Lord Lofty," who valued himself in pride of opinion, and was not backward in his appreciation of his own judgment. He was an actor, it is true, but Garrick and Cooke were also: that he sought with devotion the companionship of authors is elucidated throughout his late Memoirs, recently published by his wife. He told Dunlap of the great satisfaction he had in the reading of his life of old George Frederick, but it was obvious he recognized a much higher candidate for literary renown in the person of Cooper. As I saw much of Matthews, from the hour of his first coming up the glorious Bay of New York, during the horrors of yellow fever in the fall of 1822, until his return to his native country, I feel authorized to dwell a little on his temperament. He possessed a strangely organized nervous system, susceptible to the feeblest impressions, whether of praise or censure, attention or neglect, indifference or regard. Though his life may be said to have been passed amidst the glare of multitudinous assemblies, whose approbation, decided and emphatic, was indispensable to the free manifestation of his genius, yet the sensibilities of his nature found no condition so congenial to his happiness and composure as retirement within himself, aloof from the haunts of men, the city's noise, and the bustle of occupation. Hence it was not an unfrequent event with him, after the night's rapturous applause at the Park, on leaving the theatre to proceed forthwith across the river to Hoboken, and, accompanied perhaps by a friend, stroll through the woods of that then enchanting spot, once hallowed by the perambulations of the arborist, Micheaux, and Wilson, the ornithologist, seek repose in some common farm-house for the residue of the night, repair to the city in the morning, and be again ready for the night's entertainment. I have sometimes, with the faithful Simpson, joined him on these occasions; the roar of the waters of the Hudson near his feet, the whistling of the winds

through the beautiful chestnut and plane-trees round about him, yielded harmony to his agitated mind, and exerted a recreative power on his overwrought frame. No theriac would so effectually reach his constitutional malady as excursions such as I have thus alluded to. If occasionally the victim to so sad a dejection of spirits, he was at other times the life and soul of joyous communion, and the source of the most palatable mental relish; sound criticism on the older dramatists, and even English literature at large; Walter Scott and the Byronic age of poetry—these and kindred subjects were among the topics of the discursive materials of his conversation. Such an individual, of whom it was aptly said he was Proteus for shape and mocking-bird for tongue, could not but enlist the feelings of Mr. Cooper; and the friendship which they contracted for each other was never, I believe, interrupted during the entire period that Matthews remained in our country. Indeed, I hardly know whether I have ever seen Mr. Cooper manifest so much enthusiasm in conversation with any other person as with Mr. Matthews, when the occasion was felicitous, the subject-matter of interest, and the comedian in his happy vein.

I cannot assert whether Mr. Cooper found in music a solace for care and a cordial for spirits fatigued by mental toil. His attendance on the Italian music of the Garcia troupe would lead me to an affirmative conclusion. From his habits of observation, and his universality of attainment, I think that, in common with others of a poetic feeling, he must have been led by natural and strong provocatives to admire the sublime strains of Mozart and Rossini, when poured forth by that peerless artist, Malibran. Moreover, I feel as if it demanded a greater anatomist than I am to pronounce, that a poet of nature like Cooper, with his love of elegant literature, and his admiration of the works of the sculptor Greenough, could be constitutionally made up in proper proportions without something of the organization of Apollo. The marble bust of Mr. Cooper, executed by David of D'Avers, about 1829, now in the possession of the family of the late Charles Wilkes, of New York, his early friend, is a specimen of artistic development not unfavourable to the existence of this special quality in this distinguished character. I have but few circumstances to enable me fully to record how, as a youthful author, he bore the casual criticisms which appeared touching his early writings. As commendation was, however, their usual characteristic, they could not but encourage his best efforts. An exception to this general approval of his works appeared in a New York weekly journal, called The Minerva: it was edited by an English radical, who had recently arrived among us, the very season in which the Pio-

neers was issued. The anonymous reviewer saw fit to affirm that the pages of Cooper had an immoral tendency, and the feelings of the yet inexperienced author gave utterance to vehement anathemas as he read this foul aspersion. When, however, he had learned that the concealed critic was one of those who had left his country for his country's good, and that by his infidel and blasphemous writings he had incurred the penalty of the laws of his native land, and had only escaped the Old Bailey by flight, he wisely concluded that censure from such a quarter was actually praise in disguise.

How strongly is impressed upon my memory his personal appearance, so often witnessed during his rambles in Broadway, and amidst the haunts of this busy population. His phrenological development might challenge comparison with that of the most favoured of mortals. His manly figure, high, prominent brow, clear and fine gray eye, and royal bearing, revealed the man of will and intelligence. His intellectual hardihood was remarkable. He worked upon a novel with the patient industry of a man of business, and set down every fact of costume, action, expression, local feature, and detail of maritime operations or woodland experience, with a kind of consciousness and precision that produced a Flemish exactitude of detail, while in pourtraying action he seemed to catch, by virtue of an eagle glance and an heroic temperament, the very spirit of his occasion, and convey it to the reader's nerves and heart, as well as to his understanding. Herein Mr. Cooper was a man of unquestionable originality. As to his literary services, some idea may be formed of the consideration in which they are held by the almost countless editions of many of his works in his own country, and their circulation abroad by translations into almost every living tongue.

I may add a word or two on the extent of his sympathies with humanity. What a love he cherished for superior talents in every ennobling pursuit in life—how deep an interest he felt in the fortunes of his scientific and literary friends—what gratification he enjoyed in the physical inquiries of Dekay and Le Conte, the muse of Halleck and of Bryant, the painting of Cole, the sculpture of Greenough! Dunlap, were he speaking, might tell you of his gratuities to the unfortunate playwright and the dramatic performer. With the mere accumulators of money—those golden calves, whose hearts are as devoid of emotion as their brains of the faculty of cogitation—he held no congenial communion at any time: they could not participate in the fruition of his pastime; and he felt in himself an innate superiority in the gifts with which nature had endowed him. He was ever vigilant, a keen ob-

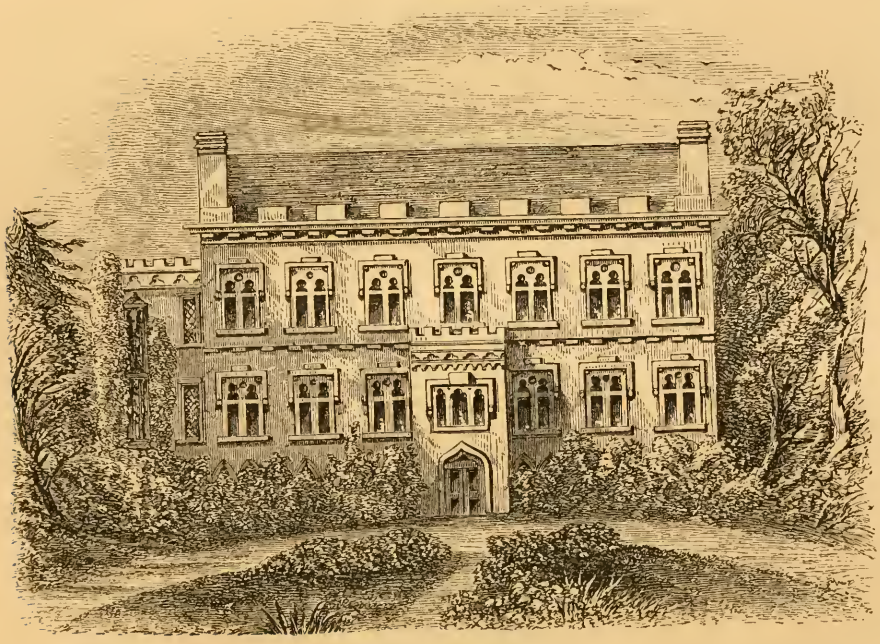
server of men and things, and in conversation frank and emphatic. It was a gratifying spectacle to encounter him with old Col. Trumbull, the historical painter, descanting on the many excellencies of Cole's pencil, in the delineation of American forest-scenery—a theme the richest in the world for Mr. Cooper's contemplation. A Shylock with his money-bags never glutted over his possessions with a happier feeling than did these two eminent individuals—the venerable Colonel with his patrician dignity, and Cooper with his somewhat aristocratic bearing, yet democratic sentiment; the one fruitful with the glories of the past, the other big with the stirring events of his country's progress, in the refinement of arts, and national power. Trumbull was one of the many old men I knew who delighted in Cooper's writings, and who in conversation dwelt upon his captivating genius.

To his future biographer, Mr. Cooper has left the pleasing duty rightly to estimate the breadth and depth of his powerful intellect—psychologically to investigate the development and functions of that cerebral organ, which for so many years, with such rapid succession and variety, poured out the creations of poetic thought and descriptive illustration—to determine the value of his capacious mind by the influence which, in the dawn of American literature, it has exercised, in rearing the intellectual fabric of his country's greatness—and to unfold the secret springs of those disinterested acts of charity to the poor and needy, which signalized his conduct as a professor of religious truth, and a true exemplar of the Christian graces. He has unquestionably done more to make known to the transatlantic world his country, her scenery, her characteristics, her aboriginal inhabitants, her history, than all preceding writers. His death may well be pronounced a national calamity. By common consent he long occupied an enviable place—the highest rank in American literature. To adopt the quaint phraseology of old Thomas Fuller, the felling of so mighty an oak must needs cause the increase of much underwood. Who will fill the void occasioned by his too early departure from among us, time alone must determine. With much consideration, I remain,

Dear sir, yours most truly,

JOHN W. FRANCIS.

Rev. Rufus W. Griswold.



OTSEGO HALL.

At a meeting of friends of the late Fenimore Cooper, held at the Astor House on Thursday evening, March 25, 1852, Mr. Washington Irving in the chair, on motion of Mr. Gulian C. Verplanck, seconded by Dr. J. M. Wainwright, the following gentlemen were constituted the

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WASHINGTON IRVING.

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GEORGE BANCROFT,	R. STARBUCK MAYO.

The Cooper Monument Fund now amounts to one thousand dollars, and the Committee appeal to the lovers of literature and of our national character throughout the Union, to contribute for the increase of this fund in such sums as they may deem proper, from one dollar and upwards, until a sum is in the hands of the treasurer sufficient to defray the cost of

a colossal statue of our great novelist, to be set up in one of the public squares in the city of New York. Subscriptions may be sent by mail to WASHINGTON IRVING, President of the Association, *Dearman Post Office, Westchester County, New York;* to JOHN A. STEVENS, Treasurer of the Association, *Bank of Commerce, New York*, or to any member of the Association, in New York. And the following gentlemen are specially authorized to receive subscriptions.

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